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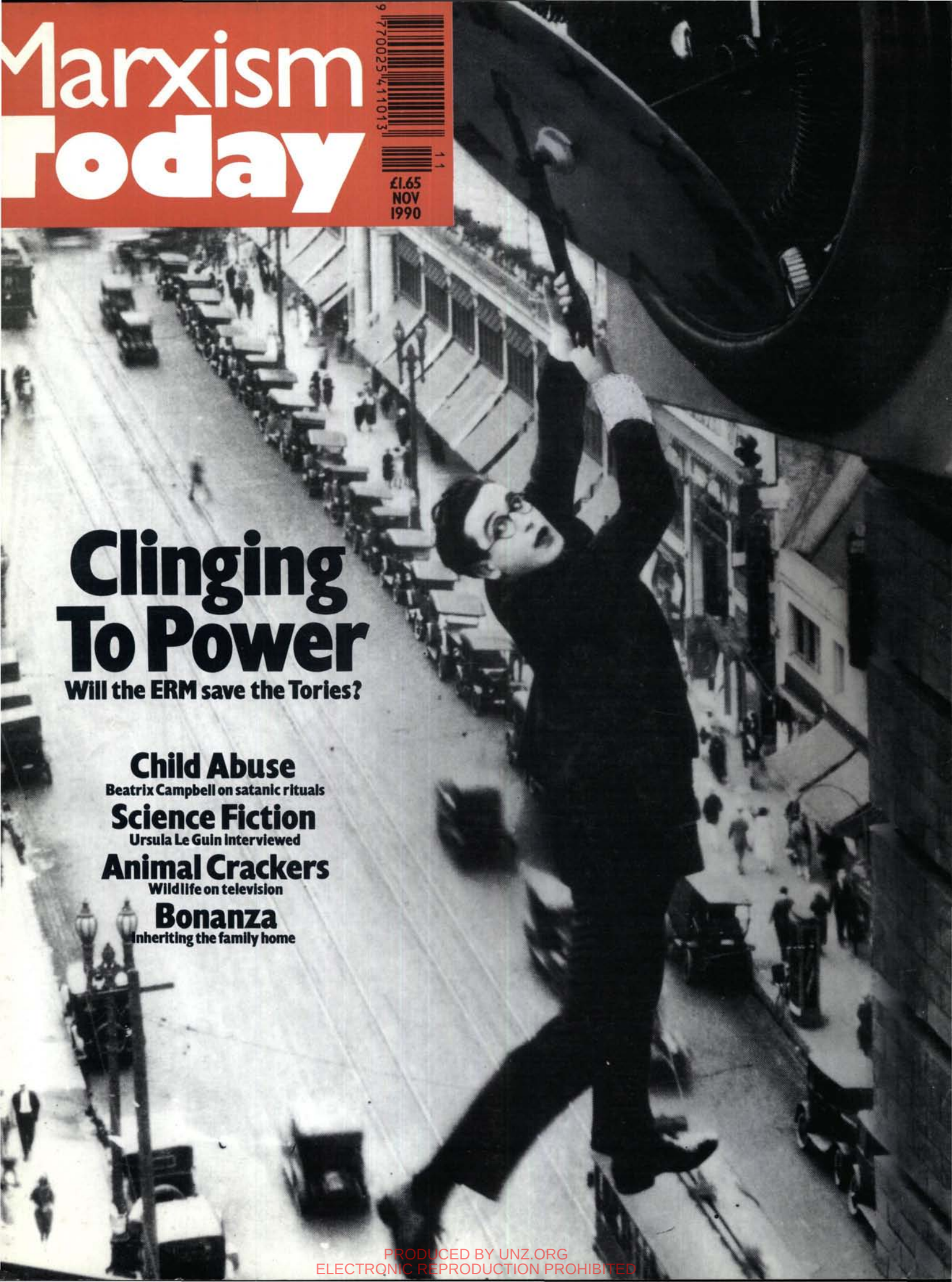

Clinging To Power

Will the ERM save the Tories?

Child Abuse
Beatrix Campbell on satanic rituals

Science Fiction
Ursula Le Guin interviewed

Animal Crackers
Wildlife on television

Bonanza
Inheriting the family home

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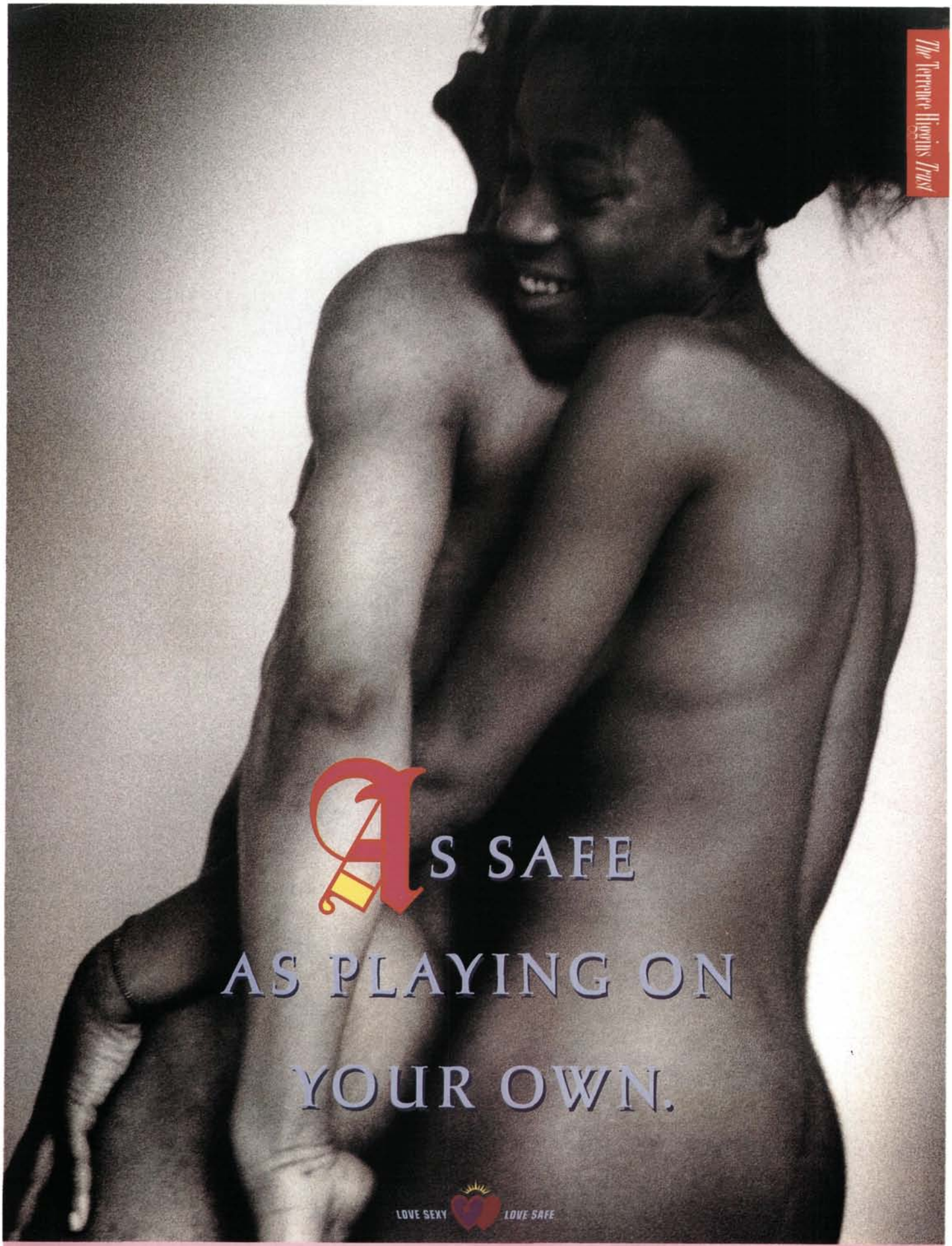

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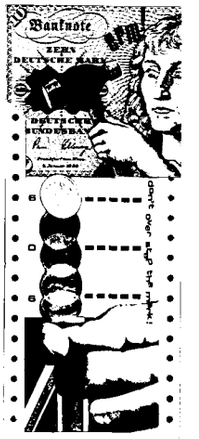

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Coming next month: Susan Strange on the new world order, Ralf Dahrendorf on Europe, the future of the design industry
December issue on sale: Wednesday 21 November

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The Raymond Williams Memorial Fund

'I've often defined my own social purpose as the creation of an educated and participating democracy. The WEA taught me much, in defining these terms.'

Raymond Williams was one of the most original and prolific socialist writers in English. Like Tawney and G. D. H. Cole, he was deeply involved in the adult education movement in the formative period of his working life: for fifteen years he worked full-time as an adult-education tutor teaching more than 1,000 WEA students in every kind of class from tutorials to summer and weekend schools.

This Fund is established to help keep that tradition alive by providing bursaries for disadvantaged adult students to attend WEA residential weekends and summer schools, and to assist those engaged in radical areas of work associated with Raymond Williams.

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Brian Simon on the battle over education

Class Struggles

Select Cartoon: Nick Newman

Education is once more at the centre of the picture. Kinnock's bid for the high ground at the Labour Party conference was countered by Thatcher a week later with a repeat of the populist cry 'choice for all' and the, by now stale, charge against '60s ideology'. It is clear that the major Tory thrust will now focus on a concerted drive towards opting out – an option to be extended to all and lubricated by extra cash. The battle is on.

But, oddly, the stage was not set by a politician. It was Sir Claus Moser's well-publicised presidential address to the British Association at the end of August which put the key issues with a sharpness and intelligence lacking in educational discourse in recent years. Education, Moser argued, should be the government's top priority. Britain was in danger of becoming 'one the the least adequately educated of all the advanced nations'.

'Major deficiencies' were undermining the country's well-being with 'dire consequences' for the future. Neither the government's education reforms nor the Labour Party's alternative proposals sought to reverse this malaise. Neither were attempting to make the required 'leap' in priority, quality and vision. A Royal Commission should be given the task of conducting an all-embracing visionary yet realistic review of British education.

Moser's plea was immediately rubbished by Michael Fallon, a government minister. What is needed, he said, is 'the discipline of the market-place, the power of the customer and the engine of competition'. With these, all will be well. There could be no clearer expression of the two opposing views now fighting for hegemony: education as a public good (requiring planning, foresight, analysis for its healthy development), and education as a commodity, its future determined strictly by market forces. This is the real issue facing education. The challenge to Labour is whether it can grasp the nettle, and fight for the conception of education as a public good with all that that implies.

This thinking is, of course, implicit in the current Labour policy – the individual items of which may be unexceptionable. But it needs stating loud and clear; its implications working out in detail – not only for the immediate but for a longer future. Today Britain is at or near the bottom of the league tables on almost all the crucial indicators measuring the state of education – the result of decades of neglect. What is needed is a clear, all-embracing vision of the reconstruction needed right across the board to ensure that the country can face the 21st century with confidence. Moser's proposal was intended to set such a movement underway.

Instead the government is nailing its flag to a short-term policy directed at destroying local authority responsibilities for education, and developing conditions for a market in education. Adam Smith himself, the guru of the marketeers, might turn in his grave since he specifically argued that a genuine market could not be achieved, hence the need for state involvement in this sphere. His arguments remain apt. The privatisation of education through opting out plus the voucher initiative is simply a means of ensuring that a differentiated, hierarchical school structure, reflecting existing social and other divisions, is created. This can solve none of the central problems facing our system.

The future in education, which way? Towards privatisation and the establishment of what the *Financial Times* defines as a 'pseudo-market' (pseudo – sham, false, spurious – OED); or towards full acceptance of education as a public good, requiring resource support, rational planning, democratic participation? These are the alternatives. The latter concept, imaginatively presented, could gain widespread support. Will the Labour Party seize its opportunity? ●

Brian Simon

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EYE TO EYE

Beatrix Campbell on the search for an inhabitable world

Dark Star

Ursula Le Guin is an award-winning science fiction writer. Her book *Tehanu* is published by Gollancz

You're in a science fiction genre – clearly you think you're doing other things?
Science fiction is one of the things I do. The canons and the genres are intensely artificial. They build in judgements: 'If it's science fiction it can't possibly be real literature'. I am simply trying to subvert this from within, partly by moving around among and between the so-called genres, and writing straight fiction which is a genre itself.

But in terms of public perception ...
I want to change all that. It is very nearly impossible to have anything that has been genrified, recognised as a major piece of literature, and that's simply wrong. The first people who published me were those characterised as science fiction – it's a rather amiable sub-world. And it's a very nice place for a young writer to begin. The trouble is then you come up against the walls...

We're in a moment where some of the preoccupations that you've written into this genre to do with the state of the earth, a more organic relationship to the space we inhabit, our imaginings about the future, are part of a global conversation.
I don't see that I and some others have got very far. Much science fiction, and most of that written by men, goes on being about wars and violent solutions to all problems. They throw in ecology and there's always a woman second in command or something, and the crews tend to be nicely gender and racially balanced – there's a lot of window dressing but the basic concerns of the old fashioned science fiction seem to be exactly the same. This decade has been a bad one for people like me.

Why?
Thatcher and Reagan?

How have you survived it?
By increasing radicalism in a sense, mainly through feminism, moving further left than I imagined.

What do you feel about the political revolution that's happened in eastern Europe?
What I feel is fiction. I'm a story writer and my response to that is a short story which is a sort of combination of rejoicing and mourning. Joy and fear.

Why is this genre the one that contains so much that seems to be about war?
I think partly because, particularly in the States, it was a strictly male genre for a long, long time. There is this large audience that wants boy toys and the guns, and the adventure stories and that's easy selling stuff. One aspect of science fiction, is that it goes in for advanced technology and our advanced technology tends so much to be weaponry. Also a war is such a tidy subject for a novel – you have the good guys and the bad guys.

But there's also loads of mess and death.
But we don't talk about that...It's always the lower orders that get killed in science fiction. I'm depressed by how fantasy keeps clinging to its incredible social castes and how it is always about the fancy people at the top and then there's the faceless masses that are sort of grubbing away. I'm guilty of that too but I've learned a few things as I went on.

So what do you feel about the modern era – the great cultural issues of modernity, as well as the things which are more familiar to us – the tower blocks and the machines, the great wars and the bomb? It may be the beginning of the end for this planet, but it's also the era in which citizens have created a culture of rights.
I think your answer is probably largely in what Pandora says in *Always Coming Home*. How she plays with the fact that she is able to dream this dream, and it's our civilisation of which the book is a critique, that enables the critique. You're pulling the rug out from under your own feet whenever you write a utopia. So you just have to dance in the air while you're doing it. You can't sit in a nice warm room with a nice typewriter and pretend you're not part of the game.

How do you organise your life?
Very quiet, very middle class. Old wooden house in a middle-sized American city on the west coast with a garden and a cat, a husband. It's all very conventional. The adventures are intellectual.

Your family are, it seems, of an intelligentsia – educated, cultured, curious. What does that give you?
A very good start. My father was an anthropologist, and the cultural relativism was simply built in, it was a very open household. Everybody goes to college, no distinction between boys and girls intellectually, very high expectations, but no punishment.

There's never the less, in your work, a pervading sense of the difficulty of life. But you will not let the future be an uninhabitable place?
If I do, I can't write stories. The entry to *Tehanu* is the figure of the child, the one most in pain. The book had been in my mind for 17, 18 years but I couldn't get it until all of a sudden I began to see Tenar with this child. The child is this element that was not present in the earlier books of Earthsea, of absolute irreparable injustice about which nothing can be done, even by a wizard.

Tell us something about the journey that you've travelled with the problem of gender in your work.
It was a long process right through the 70s and 80s, of catching up with the quicker feminists, the quicker thinkers. It's been absolutely exciting and enjoyable, reading all the women writers that I hadn't read, and finding this coincides with my centre and therefore I can write from it. Basically when I started, I was writing like a man, most of us were. I didn't convert to feminism. In a sense I have always knocked on the same doors, only feminism gave me some keys.

Where are you going with this question of masculinity?
We must be very careful not to be essentialist here, and not to say war belongs to men and women are ever so sweet. That's exactly what I was trying to get away from in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. I would say at this point, my imagination is much more engaged with women than it is with men. It's partly that I couldn't write about women when I started and it's such a joy to be able to.

Certainly in the earlier works, the scale is national, global, universal and in the main the women's tradition of writing isn't in that space is it?
I guess not, though I don't know to what extent that is an artificial perception forced upon us by the canon makers. And of course, the devaluation of the local, the domestic and so on, seems to be a male professor's game. But when we've got people like Lessing running around, you can't generalise too much.
I had adopted that kind of male stance that women are mysterious others, which is an awful funny thing for a woman to do, but of course we are all trained dogs. I jumped my hoops for years – pretty flashily. Then you realise that actually dogs walk on four legs.

Was the transition painful?
No, absolutely not. The criticism from feminists was both unfair and just, which always hurts the most, because by standing on my back they were criticising me. I felt, come on, give me credit for writing the book, give me a

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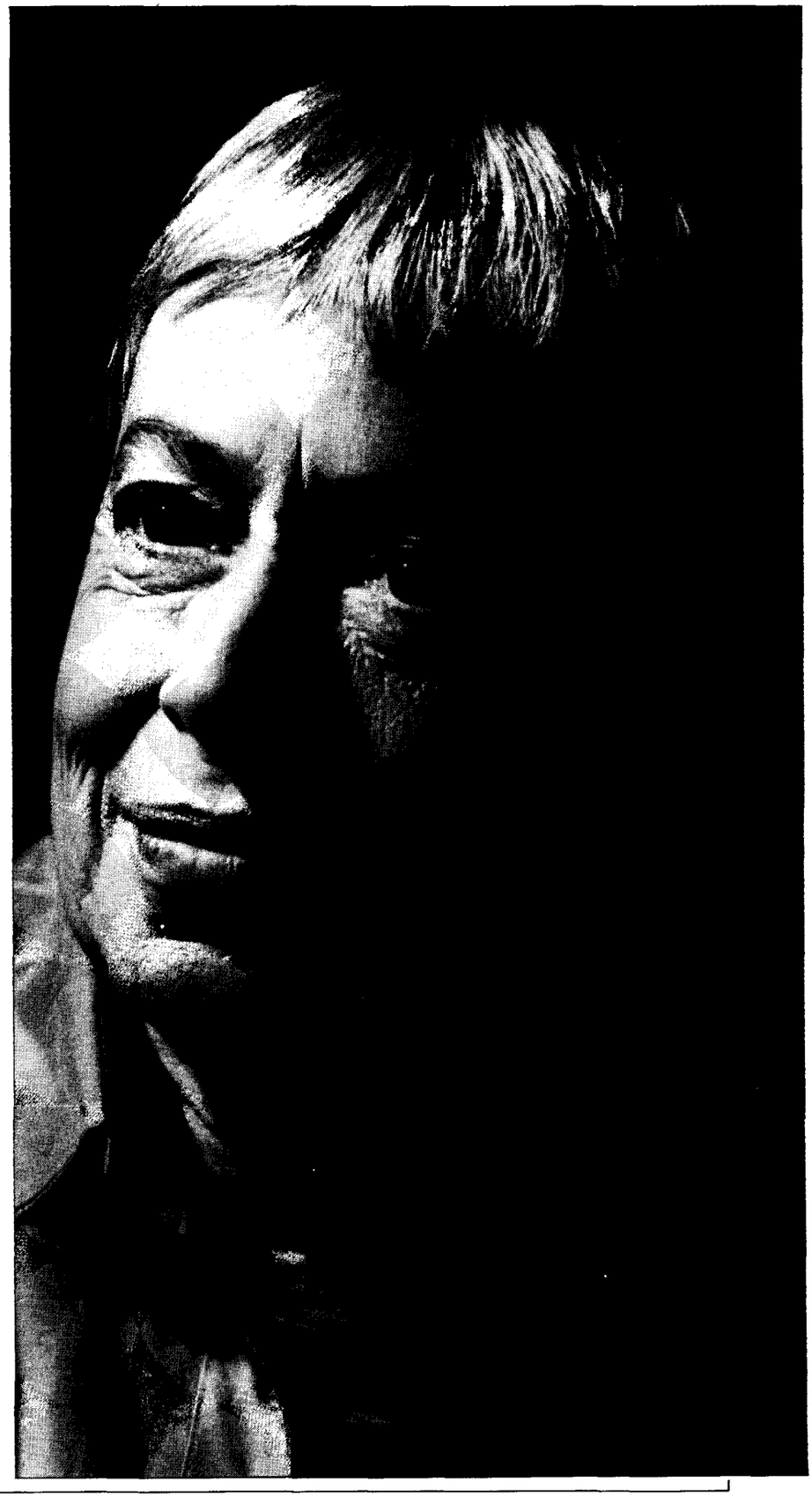
break. And then I'd been very much alone unconsciously, and to feel there really is a movement...

Are you part of that movement?
There's a wave and you're part of the wave, that is a lovely feeling. Steppenwolf is not for me – the lone suffering artist, agonizing over the moors, all that crap. I knew I couldn't buy that, but I didn't know why, and I had to wait for feminists to come along. I know that without it I would've gone silent. I would have known I was doing the wrong thing.

Can I ask you something now about ecology, because you had this great prescience...
All the facts have been lying around for 30, 40 years, all you had to do was read them. I live in a visibly, notably fragile place. I grew up in California which is probably one of the most raped places in the world. There has never been enough water in it. Everybody knows that except the people flooding in from Mexico and the middle west who deny it. So there's a kind of level of consciousness in the American west – so many other places you could sweep it under the carpet until quite recently. I'm kind of appalled at what's happened to London.

Yes, so are we. We have these myths about ourselves which are we're clean and we're healthy and we're educated. None of these are true, we now know, as compared to the rest of Europe. But we always had this place which was New York, which was worse and now we have beggars on the streets in a way that wasn't thinkable ten years ago. This is nearly the end of the twentieth century after all.
And it's beginning to look like Dickens' own.

The kind of concerns that have preoccupied you are global and universal, and at the same time you will never, never leave this question of personal responsibility. What do you feel about politics and the effectiveness of personal responsibility given its profound limits?
Built into your question is the slight tendency to accept the absolute difference between the public and the private which I don't believe in. Because if the personal is the political, then obviously nobody is going to make a lot of difference but you can't pretend that your actions don't count. If you accept the total responsibility and the total mutuality of the world, then of course there is no such thing as an isolated place or an isolated person.●



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David Bell on the French Socialists and Europe

French Lessons

The French Socialist Party is decisively pro-European. Europe has been used to modernise France, to bring Germany into an institutional framework and as an end in itself. Yet the French Socialists have, like virtually every other party, had their squabbles over Europe. One difficulty has been nationalism coming from the left of the party, most notably through Jean-Pierre Chevenèment's Ceves grouping. The difficulties were also exacerbated by the need for an alliance with the Communist Party, which expressed a visceral hostility to the Community.

The 1970s saw a series of compromises between the Franco-centric 'hexagonals' and the 'supranationalists' starting with the Bagnolet conference in 1973. A manoeuvre by Pierre Beregovoy, currently finance minister, enabled the Socialists to reject the European Monetary System as premature. They then accepted it in 1981 when the time was right. This fudge had the virtue of leaving Mitterrand's hands free and not dividing the party. The majority motion at the party's decisive Metz congress in 1979 was committed to Europe but their temporary ally was still hostile. Mitterrand had managed to remain master of European policy and his presidential programme reflected his view. Ceves could not be repudiated without damaging the prospect of alliance with the Communists.

The constraint from the Communists began to diminish after Mitterrand's unexpected victory in the 1981 presidential election. He chose European Commissioner Claude Cheysson as foreign minister and foreign policy remained a presidential reserved domain. Despite a brief, and unsuccessful, attempt to discover whether an alliance with London could replace the Franco-German relationship, Mitterrand soon established a close partnership with Chancellors Schmidt and Kohl.

Mitterrand supported the deployment of Cruise and Pershing and took a hard line on Jaruzelski's coup in Poland. The Socialist government agreed to the 'southern enlargement' of the Community (which the right had postponed) and stepped up defence collaboration with the Germans. Mitterrand also promoted ambitious proposals for European social, research and industrial projects and looked for a coordinated European expansion. They were hampered by Britain's obsessive deflation but Mitterrand encouraged a pay-out to end Thatcher's 'I want my money back' budget crisis – one area of community friction was thereby reduced.

The weakness of the franc and the dash for growth pursued after 1981 posed problems, in 1983 the balance of payments deficit became unmanageable. The choice made by the Socialist government was to cut back on internal demand and later on to free the market. The alternative 'Albanian' solution depended on a protectionism incompatible with the Community. Although Chevenèment quit the government in 1983 the Communists stayed in for another year, Chevenèment returned as the Communists quit.

The turning point for European strategy was 1983-4. One lesson which the ill-fated expansion of 1981-83 drove home was the fact that policies can no longer be carried out in isolation. France needs Europe. It is not possible nowadays to climb into the safety of the nation-state and pitch away the ladder.

The Socialists were decisively beaten in the parliamentary election of 1986, but Mitterrand used the community to appeal to the centrists, the floating voters. Mitterrand, speaking in Strasbourg in 1984, supported institutional reform, including the strengthening of the Parliament and the Commission. He was careful, however, not to criticise the Council of Ministers which would have lost relative power. The Socialist Party has been fairly pragmatic about reforming the institutions and will, in time, produce detailed proposals for increasing the power of the parliament.

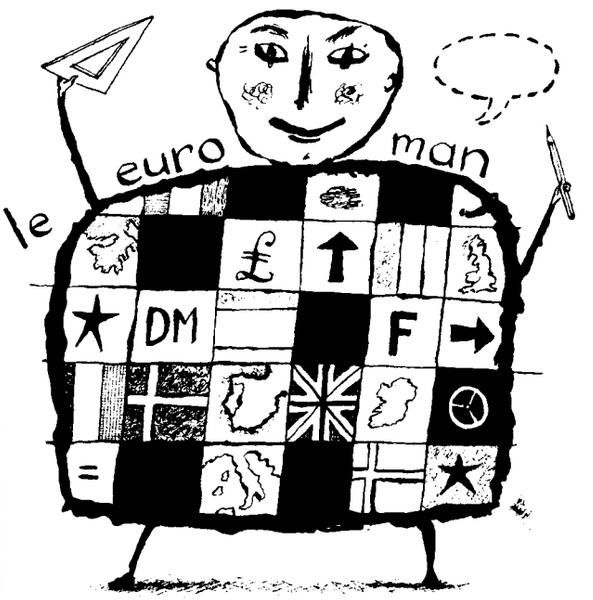
Mitterrand's attitude to the Community has been pragmatic. This has led to a number of misunderstandings. When Mitterrand spoke about a 'confederal' project involving the Eastern Block and Russia, he annoyed Delors who tends to be a Brussels centrist. But Mitterrand was not running down the Community, which he also wants to see strengthened, he envisaged a 'semi-detached' wider Europe around the central core. The 'confederal project' was picked up by the party's Left and used to contest the Community. The ensuing fracas shows that nationalist reaction could still occur were Europe to appear dictatorial.

When it comes to the question of '1992' the contrast with Britain is dramatic. the French government has put its emphasis on public investment, the public sector and 'compititivity' (mergers and acquisitions) in preparation for the single market. The public investment includes the well known Chunnel, which is virtually French, and the rail network for TGV – high speed trains – intended to make France the hub of the new Europe.

'The French Socialist Party is a part of the European Socialist Group. Like other socialist parties in western Europe, it has promoted the social dimension of the EC to counterbalance the free market thrust of the 1992 proposals'

The French Socialist Party is a part of the European Socialist Group and shares in the joint manifesto. It has like other socialist parties in western Europe been concerned to promote the social dimension to Europe to counterbalance the free market thrust of the 1992 proposals. The logic of the free market has led it to table proposals to strengthen institutions to deal with the 'democratic deficit' and to give them a redistributionist role.

The Socialists have been sceptical about the plans for the enlargement of the Community to eastern Europe, hence Mitterand's confederal project. Although there are qualms about supranational aspects of the Community being built, the leadership wants to hasten integration, including monetary union. Finally, there is abiding concern about Germany, but the Socialist Party sees a closer Franco-German partnership within an ever-more cohesive Community as the best means of minimising these fears.●



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PREVIEW

Anna Veen talks to Margaret Atwood

Future Imperfect

The Handmaid's night out: Tall tales in the toilets

There are impeccable credentials behind the film of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Volker Schlöndorff, the director, is best known for his work in putting the final stamp on such arch dissenters as Heinrich Böll (*The Lost Honour Of Katharina Blum*) and Günter Grass (*The Tin Drum*). Margaret Atwood, who wrote the original novel, has a distinctive feminist flavour and following. Natasha Richardson, the lead actress, comes of Redgrave stock. And Harold Pinter, the adaptor, needs no introducing for British liberal audiences. Strange, then, that Atwood's subtle dystopia has emerged as such a flatly-coloured, slickly-moulded Hollywood product.

As the Euro-movie machinery whirred into action, it left little of Atwood's vision intact. Pinter bled dry the background of the novel, which depicts the movement of America into a highly plausible dystopia, assuming the victory of a fundamentalist Right. Atwood's method was to use the memory of her heroine to show this social transformation as realistically as possible, since, as she says, 'the future is like death, nobody has ever been there. But I still wanted to make it convincing so I didn't use anything that isn't in the programme of the American fundamentalists today'.

These latter-day puritans are preaching everything from women-back-to-the-home to death-to-homosexuals. Atwood explains, 'I thought about it realistically: if I wanted to put you back in the home, how would I go about it? Probably, I'd make it impossible for you to have a job. I'd make it illegal for you to own property. I wanted to show the mechanics of divesting women of their power.'

But the problems of translating Atwood's idiosyncratic stream-of-consciousness style onto the screen means that most of this disappears. The process of social transformation is more or less lost, leaving the story to float as weightless as science fiction.

Unfortunately, the film was originally shot to hold lengthy voice-overs, which were cut at the final moment, leaving Natasha Richardson's face to struggle silently with the weight of expectation and interpretation. Without its verbal subtlety, much of the novel's charged symbolism is lost: 'Films are too literal', Atwood says shortly. 'It's too hard to film a metaphor.'

Overall, Atwood's tone tends to suggest that she is dissatisfied with the film. When we discuss the parallels between mothering and artistic creation that crop up in her work, she smiles a little bitterly: 'No it's not my baby. When your books go out into the world they're not yours any more.'

But she still believes in the film and its messages, and admires – if she does not entirely sympathise with – the visions of the men who were its foster-fathers. She admires producer Daniel Wilson: 'Of course his wife put him up to it. She persuaded him into it. It was difficult, because nobody in America wants to touch a film that deals with an apocalypse masterminded by the fundamentalist Right. But he sweated blood to make that movie'.

The rifts created by the circumstances of an international co-production are obvious in *The Handmaid's Tale*. The touchstone of the novel is Atwood's female consciousness, raised by her 60s and 70s experiences. The North American context is vivid too. Where else in the West are fundamentalists confident enough to preach the return of women to traditional womanly roles, death to homosexuals, and the restructuring of society along puritan lines?

Taking a male adapter and director destroys the first of these contexts. Taking a British adapter and a German director the second. Atwood tends to downplay these differences, 'It doesn't do to be simple about gender,' she says and the Europeans know about totalitarianism

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too'. Yet she cannot deny that certain results of this re-contextualising upset her.

The worst divergence occurred in the German publicity machine. *The Handmaid's Tale* was advertised there with posters showing a naked woman with a blood-streaked back, her hands chained behind her. 'The advertisement was extraordinary,' Atwood says. 'The slogan ran, "Every man's desire, every woman's dread". Then, I was angry about the methods men used to film my novels. I didn't want them marketed as soft porn.'

But although Atwood feels that an influx of women into film-making would make a difference, she feels pessimistic about her own ability to take such control. 'It's easy for women to write,' she says. 'You don't have to ask someone to have millions of dollars worth of confidence in you. But in Germany, there were a few women who tried to persuade me that I could direct. And I was tempted.'

Atwood is eager to emphasise that the few unfortunate circumstances that surround the film should not entirely damn it. Indeed, although it opened to mixed reviews in the States, and will probably seem even more alien here, where Christian fundamentalism is not an immediate social threat, there is a refreshing sense of enterprise about the project. The visual metaphors and individual performances are excellent, and its sense of responsibility remains.

Volker Schlöndorff sidesteps any opportunity for sexual voyeurism. The peculiar scenes in which the Commander (Robert Duval) makes love to the Handmaid (Natasha Richardson) in the presence of his wife (Faye Dunaway) are carefully untitillating; while the few moments of free sex between Natasha Richardson and her chosen lover carry a charged, erotic tenderness rarely seen on Hollywood screens.

'Whatever the problems of adapting a complex novel,' Atwood says, 'movies communicate on a scale that novels just don't, any more. And that makes it worth while.'●

Capital City

The Invisible City **(19 October – 1 December) is the second exhibition in The Photographers' Gallery's ongoing London Project. In contrast to the first exhibition in 1988, which faced the visible signs of dramatic change in the capital, *The Invisible City* deals with qualities that are not so easily seen or defined.**

The aim of this exhibition is to piece together, through the commissioned work of six young artists, a series of fragments towards a representation of the 'human condition' of London in 1990. People are reasserted as the focus of the city, but not in the familiar pattern of urban documentary surveys.

None of the artists in the exhibition is constrained by notions of documentary realism. In their work the real and the imaginary flow together, their city is one built around the physical and psychological terrains mapped out by its inhabitants.

The above picture is part of a series by Simon Crump. Crump's images register a familiar ambivalence to the city, one which has cut through all representations of the metropolis since the first stirrings of modernism. On one hand, the city is perceived as life-giving, energising body and soul, creating possibilities, expanding and extending experience. On the other, the city is a predator that either denies or corrupts all levels of personal contact.

The image of London formed in this exhibition is often dark and oppressive, a city of indistinct locations, and few, if any, recognisable landmarks. There is a sense of confinement here at odds with what, in recent years, has come to signify 'the new London' – the soaring atriums, the shopping malls and arcades – places where history has been reconstituted and commodified.

The pace and colour of public life, so much in evidence in recent independent photography, is ignored here in favour of more hidden territories, dense and layered spaces where history is not sold but hangs heavily, creating a sense of unease.●

David Chandler

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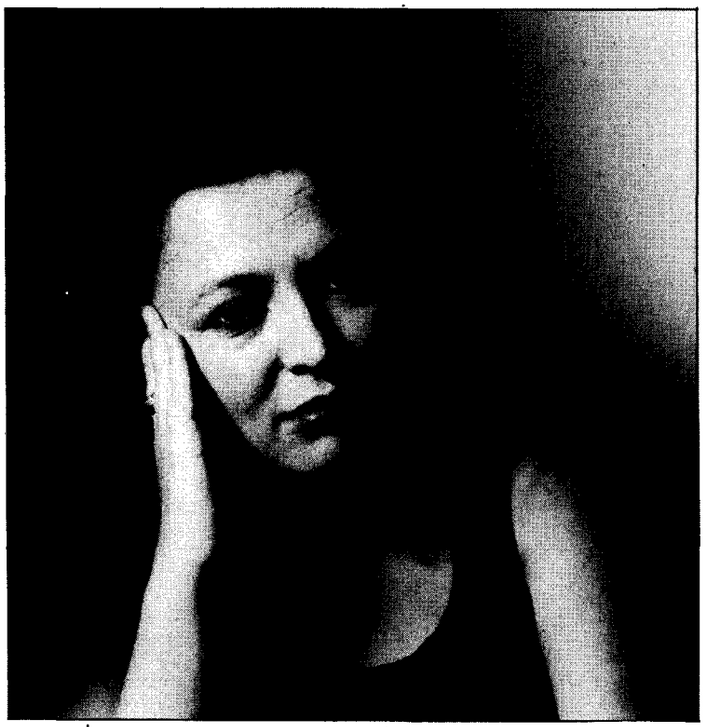
Suzanne Moore



The end of nuclear power in the home

Family Fortunes

As working mothers now scrabble for part-time nursery care, it seems scarcely believable that one of the earliest demands of the feminist movement was 24-hour creches. Or that Shulamith Firestone called for a 'cybernetic communism' in which 'childbearing could be taken over by technology'. Twenty years later, the Tories gather under the slogan 'Keeping The Family Together', while in the States conservatives methodically hack away at abortion rights and freedom of speech all in the name of the family.

Thatcher warns us of the danger of a 'creche generation' conveniently ignoring the fact that the only successfully established 24-hour creches – public schools – actually produced most of her government. While she may be dangerously out of touch with her call for mothers to stay at home, Labour, with its air-brushed images of decidedly *unclear* families, is still playing safe with its insipid demands for men to spend more time with their children.

Nobody wants to be seen as 'anti-family', least of all the desperately heterosexual Kinnocks. And as *The Family Way: A New Approach To Policy Making* by Anna Coote, Harriet Harman and Patricia Hewitt suggests, changing demographics have refreshed the parts that mere feminism couldn't reach. It is now fully legitimate and indeed sensible to demand more childcare, support for the increasing number of lone parents and parental leave for men as well as women. All of this would be very nice as well as freeing up the women needed by the labour market.

Many would see this pragmatic approach, beating the Tories on their own moral high-ground, as a far more positive one. But in the rush to be more pro-family-than-thou, we stand to lose as much as we gain. It is not that the family is the root of all evil and that we should all go and live in communes. It's rather that, although we are finally in a situation where we can talk about the rights of fathers as well as what's best for the children, we can still only discuss women's position in the family if we sneak it in through the back door.

Although the critique of the family as the key locus of female oppression remains one of the central insights of feminism, there has been a lot of back-tracking by feminists themselves on this issue. Feminists have families too. Trying to resolve the tension between coming from a family and having a family with an understanding of just how bloody awful it is a lot of the time for a lot of women, has produced some bizarre strategies. Everything from a bovine celebration of motherhood to Germaine Greer's romanticisation of the extended peasant family to the currently fashionable neutered language in which we discuss family policy.

We now talk euphemistically of 'parenting' instead of mothering and fathering as though the two were interchangeable. In the wonderful world of *Parenthood*, The Movie and The Policy, men magically want to take equal responsibility for their offspring. Maybe they really do *say* that they want to, but the fact is they don't do it in practice – I won't bore you with statistics.

Yet, as Anna Coote writes, in contrast to the Right's stress on financial responsibility and discipline, the Left stresses men's changing role within the family as a caring, sharing one. Very cosy I'm sure. I hate to be bitter and twisted about it, but how is this to come about? And isn't it just shoring up an already crumbling structure anyway?

If anything, men's role in the family is becoming more and more marginalised. A common pattern is the women and children as the stable unit with men drifting in and out. As the divorce rate soars and women remarry or go into other relationships the children go with her. It is not that the children of single mothers are more likely to be emotionally depraved, the problem is that they are more likely to be financially deprived. Yet the Left was decidedly uneasy at the Tory initiative for increased legislation to make men pay for their kids.

Labour attacked the policy on the grounds that it was unworkable and not enough anyway. The issue of whether we want men to be financially responsible was dodged, although the image of the man who has to be hunted down and persuaded by law to hand over 11 quid a week is a different one from the nice Labour Party man who would take paternity leave if only he could get it.

All of this leaves women with the worst of both worlds. At the moment they have all the disadvantages of the nuclear family without any guarantee of the supposed 'advantages'. Except for an increasingly narrow class of people, they are neither kept nor protected. Child abuse – the standard or satanic version – rape and domestic violence all occur within the haven of the family.

Although the feminist family may be more flexibly defined, undermining the traditional family is no longer the business of feminism. Resignation has replaced idealism and there is little to choose between left and right pronouncements on the perceived crisis. As more marriages break down under the strain of women's demands it seems to me entirely appropriate that there should be a crisis and that we should once again be pushing to talk about women's position *within* the family as well as outside it. We should be able to demand childcare, not because employers need more female workers nor because it's better for the kids, but because it is better for *us*.

As the authentic family dies its natural death, economically and ideologically, and the family is increasingly defined as being 'whatever you come home to', we should take our cues from the infamous Clause 28. Instead of 'the family way', surely it is our business to promote 'pretended family relationships' because we know that the real thing sucks.●

Suzanne Moore will be writing a regular monthly column.

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Sexual Moralism

From Anna Marie Smith of Feminists Against Censorship

Suzanne Moore's reservations regarding the non-sexist man phenomenon (*MT* October) are well-justified.

The Campaign Against Pornography and Censorship, which has the active support of many of these 'male feminists', seeks to introduce legislation which would have serious implications for alternative art, feminist and lesbian and gay publications. Members of this group assure us that they have no intention of promoting censorship. They would like, however, to introduce new laws which would enable women to sue the producers and distributors of 'pornography' wherever it 'causes' 'harm'.

Their definition of 'pornography' is dangerously broad and vague. It includes, for example, images of women 'posed provocatively inviting sexual penetration and arousal... [and/or] portrayed as sexual objects'. Exactly what does this mean? Many of the images produced by women, especially by lesbians, could be interpreted in this way.

This group supports Labour MP Dawn Primarolo's Location of Pornographic Materials Bill. Other supporters of this bill include Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Brian Sedgemore. It would allow the sale of 'pornography' only in licensed premises. It also has a broad and vague definition of 'pornography' which refers to both images of women and images of men.

Primarolo has stated that the bill did not originally refer to pornographic images of men, and that this amendment was later added, ostensibly to avoid sex discrimination. She has also expressed concern about the possibilities of anti-gay applications of this amendment. Such concern, however, would be of little use if the bill were indeed passed. Virtually every establishment which sold mainstream gay male magazines such as *Him* and *Gay Times* would risk prosecution under this legislation.

Even if the Campaign Against Pornography and Censorship is truly interested in defending all sexually explicit material which is not sexist, however exotic or strange, from censorship, they cannot guarantee that any legislation which they proposed would not be amended and interpreted against their original intentions. In the anti-gay and anti-feminist atmosphere in Britain, it is naive in the extreme to suggest that such a reinterpretation is impossible. The Primarolo bill itself should cause concern in this regard.

The National Council for Civil Liberties has withdrawn its support for this group's protest. When Andrea Dworkin led several attempts in the US to enact legislation similar to that proposed by the Campaign Against Pornography and Censorship, her initiatives were met by resistance from feminists, civil libertarians, artists, alternative publishers and lesbians and gay men. British men who are truly interested in supporting a democratic, rather than authoritarian, feminism should also reject this group's claims.

Suzanne Moore's distinction between feminist sexual politics and sexual moralism is of central importance. The anti-pornography crusade offers, for men, a high-profile platform for confession and recantation. For both women and men, it provides an illusory solution to sexism. Men's support *is* needed for feminist work on the more intractable, and perhaps less glamourous, problems of unequal pay, job discrimination, sexual violence and harassment, and the unequal distribution of childcare and housework.

It is both ironic and unjust that well-intentioned 'pro-feminist' men are attracted to a campaign which will make absolutely no contribution to these feminist struggles. Their only 'achievement' would in fact be the further restriction of alternative, and non-sexist, discourse on sexuality. And for this we are supposed to award them feminist points?●

Men Take Issue

I certainly don't grudge Suzanne Moore her space in October's *Marxism Today*, but it's a pity that she went for the easy targets among anti-sexist men.

Given the development of feminism over the past 30 years, it would be surprising if some men weren't consumed by guilt or envy towards women. But if Suzanne doesn't enjoy hearing about all this, she should take the trouble to look further than the stereotypes.

What *Achilles Heel* shares with academic studies of masculinity and men's consciousness-raising groups is an interest in dismantling the monolith of 'natural' masculinity. It's no secret that we've cribbed the idea from earlier work on femininity, but feminists themselves have quite properly believed that they have more important things to do.

Taking issue with the stern dictates of manliness and machismo doesn't arise from guilt or altruism, but from self-liberation. Obviously this carries a tendency towards obsessive navel-watching of no interest to outsiders. But the outcome is likely to be significant not just for men.

Once masculinity ceases to be experienced as an inexorable code, there can be a relaxation of that sense of personal inadequacy and the compulsion to over-compensate which have such unpleasant consequences for women. Rather that than the media mirage of the new man any day.

John Tosh, London

Not Grown Up

According to Suzanne Moore (*MT* October) 'men are against men again'. If this is so, then I welcome it. Since time immemorial we men have gone to extraordinary lengths to exclude just about everyone else on grounds of gender, sexuality, race and class. At least if we are fighting each other it shows that there is dissent within patriarchy.

It is easy to criticise 'self-flagellating men' who are often so consumed with guilt as to render themselves intellectually and emotionally impotent, but many of these men are so needy that they require a lot of emotional support. I think it is better that we try to build a network where other men can support those in this state. This work at present is carried out by women.

I have also bemoaned the lack of practical commitment many so-called anti-sexist men actually give to others. In short, I think it fair to assume that most men have just never grown up, in the sense of having to make decisions alone and take personal responsibilities seriously. However, I would rather spend time with men such as these than others who seem content to hide their insecurities behind an ideological facade, call it socialism, ecologism or whatever.

What bothers me about Suzanne's suggestion, that men should simply step aside for women, or 'give women more space', is that this is patronising in the extreme. Any oppressed group has to take power for itself. The purpose of all anti-sexists everywhere might be to make men realise that there are other expressions of power than the ones we at present monopolise.●

Jeremy Killingray, London

Critical Studies

I read Suzanne Moore's article (*MT* October) with great interest, and would like to give some additional information. The new Unwin Hyman series she referred to is called 'Critical Studies On Men And Masculinities' rather than 'Men, Masculinites And Social Theory', which is the title of one of the books just published in the series.

The series as a whole is concerned with *critical* studies on men, which includes a critique of men, and a critique of 'men's studies' as it has been developed in some instances. For example, *Men, Masculinities And Social Theory* includes several chapters that are very critical of 'men's studies'. It is also important to add that this book brings together writing by both women and men; that women and men are involved in the international advisory board of the series; and that we are keen to publish further work on men by women authors and black authors.●

Jeff Hearn, Bradford

Graffiti

Being retired can either be darkness at noon, or seeing new visions and reading more of everything, including *MT*. Sometimes, I feel, to qualify as a reader I ought to be 23, half out of college, wearing a yellow-and-something t-shirt with a highly improbable logo. You can't please everybody!

There is no doubt in my mind of the contribution this magazine has made to the political and social advances worldwide, but sometimes I feel it ought to have a couple of graffiti pages where two-line comments and cartoons from the readers interrupted the flow of intellectual debate.●

Dave Davis, London

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End Of An Era

'Goodbye To All That' was an apt headline for Eric Hobsbawm's article in October's *Marxism Today*.

Unlike most other historians of his substance, he writes well and lucidly. His style is captivating. But why, after his highly informative and interesting analysis of the 70-odd-year period of the October Revolution, does he say, 'So let us wish eastern Europe luck as it ends an old era and is about to enter the 21st century. We shall need luck... '?

This is the nearest to a lament that I have read in the pages of *MT*, and I earnestly hope that Hobsbawm is not consciously singing a swan-song.

His writings are always so valuable, his guidance in political matters of the immediate future well-heeded. It would be calamitous if that discontinued.

Admitting the richness of this informative essay, I feel it is as eloquent of the political features Hobsbawm omits as of those he includes. He appears constricted by the moribund political structures of the 20th century, which seems strange for a historian of his excellence, more aware than most of us that political structures come and go.

Why does he, for instance, make no reference to the United Nations? Why does he not acknowledge the worldwide anti-nuclear peace movement – probably the most visible and persistent political activity since world war two? Indeed, the politics of survival as a whole, manifested in the green movement, does not seem to merit a mention.

Yet these are bound to be historical instruments of the future. If we do not address them seriously now, we shall kiss goodbye not only to the October Revolution era, but to the 21st century as well.●

Donald J Wood, Wimbledon

No Change

When, earlier this year, *Guardian* columnist Hugo Young, commenting on events in eastern Europe, suggested that the views of western fellow travellers about the communist past might make 'fascinating reading', there was little or no response. Welcome though Eric Hobsbawm's analysis of the collapse of communism in eastern Europe is (*MT* October), it is difficult to conclude, as he seems to, that the reasons were almost entirely economic.

The issue seems to me to be more fundamental. Communist practices and structures, much of the world over, have been at odds with its claimed values and ideology since its inception.

Talking to east European communists on tv recently, Michael Ignatieff suggested that there was, on their part, an 'inability to grieve' and an 'absence of honourable pain' – words given greater significance when, in the summer, Vaclav Havel told the US Congress that he shared with his fellow citizens 'a sense of culpability for our former reprehensible passivity'.

I admit unreservedly, like Hobsbawm, to having also been 'proved wrong'. While no one expects self-flagellation, it would do the CPGB no harm to listen and respond to the likes of Ignatieff or Havel. For can anyone be really expected to believe they have some future when they display no humility or feeling of culpability about their past?

It will never be known what effect perestroika and glasnost might have had in the Soviet Union or eastern Europe had it been introduced in, say, the 60s. Communism brought about its own demise – by the inability of communists to change, rather than the failing of an economic system alone.●

Bert Munro, Rouillac, France

Engine Of Change

Martin Pawley's entertaining article on the motor car (*MT* September) dealt squarely with one half of the problem of the car, namely that 'personal mobility is a priceless freedom', and that the car is therefore here to stay in some form for as long as we can imagine.

He miscued on the second half, however, in proposing that 'cars cease to be exotic products of material culture and become again simple artefacts like ballpoint pens or quartz watches'.

As a Citroen BX enthusiast, he should know this to be psychologically impossible. The car is too libidinised an object, too ready a vehicle for our dreams and too close to our own bodies for this to be possible.

Hence the Trabant is not a feasible starting-point for designing the car of the future, at least not without a new body by Giugiaro and new mechanics from Wolfsburg. A more likely starter is Pawley's dinosaur – a multi-valve turbo model – but perhaps running on vegetable oil.

The total disappearance of the petrol engine may be impossible, but its substantial replacement by one with much less destructive emissions is not, and on that possibility the future of the car depends.●

Barry Richards, Reading

Military Myth

As Fred Halliday and Joe Stork made clear (*MT* October), there is an immediate danger in the Gulf and also an interlocking set of long-term problems. The immediate danger is of the outbreak of a major war in which the full array of modern weaponry would be used – up to and including chemical and modern weapons.

We can all agree with Fred Halliday that bringing down the Iraqi regime is in the interests of all the peoples of the Middle East and that the use of armed force by strong states to take over weak states is to be opposed. The question is whether making war on Saddam Hussein would achieve those aims.

The quick, surgical strike is a military fiction. A war aimed at dislodging Iraq from Kuwait would be a bloody and destructive affair with many civilian casualties.

Even if such a war were 'won', what would we then do? Maintain an indefinite force of occupation in Kuwait? Drive on to Baghdad? Build up a huge Saudi military machine as a surrogate instrument of Western interests, just as we did with the shah?

Just beginning to list the problems is to demonstrate the uselessness of offensive military action.

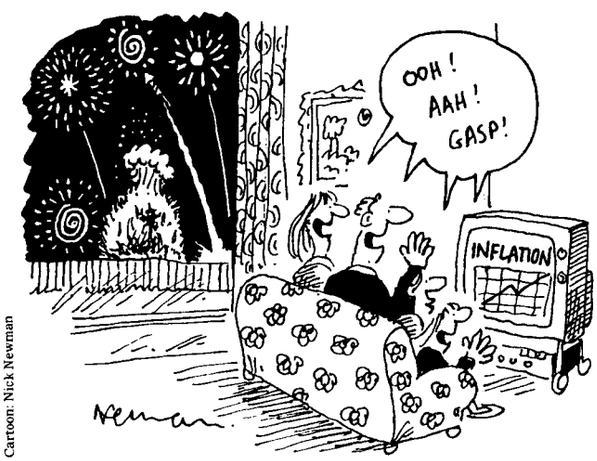
There is a strong case for a defensive United Nations peace-keeping force to deter further Iraqi aggression. We then have to work hard to make sure that sanctions work, rather than making the odd pious genuflection in their direction while tacitly assuming they will fail.

US and British tanks are not the only ones that need constant, expensive maintenance to function in the desert. The Mirage needs men and materials to keep it flying. With no more imported spares, foreign technicians or training, let alone new weapons, the Iraqi military machine will become progressively degraded. There is the message for other would-be aggressors.

Yes, that may well leave Kuwait in Iraqi hands as a short-term pyrrhic victory for Saddam, but it is at that point that the world can begin to deal with the longer-term, overall problems of the Middle East – something that lies outside the scope of a short letter.

We have to get rid of the notion of a military solution before we can begin to address the real problems.●

Lionel Trippett, CND, London



Cartoon: Nick Newman

Editorial Note:

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After ERM

HARD TERMS

The government has joined ERM in order to save itself. **John Grahl**, co-author of a new book on 1992, discusses the longer-term meaning of the decision

By taking the pound into the European exchange rate mechanism, John Major obtained some relief in a very nasty situation. The basic cause of this predicament was the general failure of Conservative economic policy over the past 10 years. Inflation has not been controlled, and the long-run decline in industrial competitiveness has not been reversed. As a result, Britain is running a very large balance-of-payments deficit, which is financed by borrowing abroad. This need to borrow was the reason for the high interest rates. The large deficit made it probable that sterling would fall on the foreign exchanges, and this made lending to Britain risky. The high interest rates were needed to compensate lenders for the risks of holding sterling.

As the deficit persisted, the predicament got worse. Confidence in sterling was so shaky that even 15% interest rates, maintained for the record period of a year, seemed unable to stop wealth-holders moving into other currencies. Any large-scale selling of sterling would tend to provoke a cumulative decline in the exchange rate by further undermining confidence.

Although the Treasury and the Bank of England were not committed to any particular exchange rate for the pound, they could not accept a large and precipitate fall in sterling's value because it would push up the prices of imported goods and add to inflation. On the other hand, it was also difficult to contemplate the alternative – a further rise in interest rates to compensate holders of sterling for a rise in perceived exchange-rate rise. An increase in interest rates beyond 15% would obviously be bad news politically. It would also be damaging economically at a time when production is stagnating and unemployment starting to rise. But the danger of having to accept either faster inflation or higher interest rates kept increasing as the trade deficit persisted.

Britain's participation in the exchange-rate mechanism eases these pressures because it underpins the exchange rate of sterling against the currencies of our partners in the European Monetary System (EMS) – most notably against the D-mark.

The ERM is not just an agreement to fix exchange rates, as was the case, for example, in the Bretton Woods system during the 50s and 60s. ERM involves a *collective* agreement to defend those rates. Thus, if sterling comes under pressure in the markets, the other central banks of the system, including the powerful German Bundesbank, are committed to defend it – by buying sterling themselves and by lending foreign exchange to the Bank of England.

ERM membership removes, at a stroke, the risk of a drastic decline in the value of sterling, which is now pegged to other currencies. Britain's credit rating is improved by the guarantee of exchange-rate stability and thus British policy-makers have gained an important degree of freedom. It was logical to announce both ERM entry and a cut in interest rates at the same time, because it was the first that made the second possible. Further reductions in interest rates are expected to follow as the government takes full advantage of sterling's new stability.

Lower interest rates have been obtained at the cost of increased dependence on our partners in the EMS. The full consequences of this dependence may take some time to appear. Although the immediate threat to sterling has been removed, participation in ERM does nothing to correct our fundamental economic problems. It makes Britain's balance-of-payments deficit easier to *finance*, but it does nothing to reduce the deficit. Indeed, participation may well have a perverse effect because cheaper credit, as a result of lower interest rates, will allow consumers to buy more imported goods, and lower mortgage rates may rekindle inflation in the housing market.

'Continuing competitive decline of British industry makes an eventual devaluation of sterling inevitable'

The continuing competitive decline of British industry, exacerbated by the policies of the last 10 years, makes an eventual devaluation of sterling inevitable in spite of ERM. The rules of the system require our partners to defend sterling against speculative attacks – and they are obliged to provide unlimited credit to the Bank of England to do so. But this is short-term. Our partners do not have to finance, for any length of time, a deficit which represents levels of spending in Britain completely out of line with British production.

The same point has been made by several finance ministers and central bankers in the EC, including Karl-Otto Pöhl, head of the Bundesbank. Our partners feel that Britain should have taken more strenuous measures – including devaluation – to improve the balance of payments, before seeking help to prop up the pound. Such statements are unusual from finance officials whose code of conduct normally forbids any comment which could undermine confidence in another currency. Their explicitness on this occasion expresses a rather cynical view of British policy.

When it becomes too difficult to finance the payments deficit by the measures outlined earlier, it will have to be adjusted – either by increasing the production of exports or by squeezing expenditure on imports or by a combination of the two. The process will be painful and protracted because British companies are not sufficiently competitive to deliver a rapid increase in exports and because high levels of inflation continue to increase their costs. If the pattern established over more than 60 years is repeated, a devaluation will be necessary to make exports more profitable and to discourage imports.

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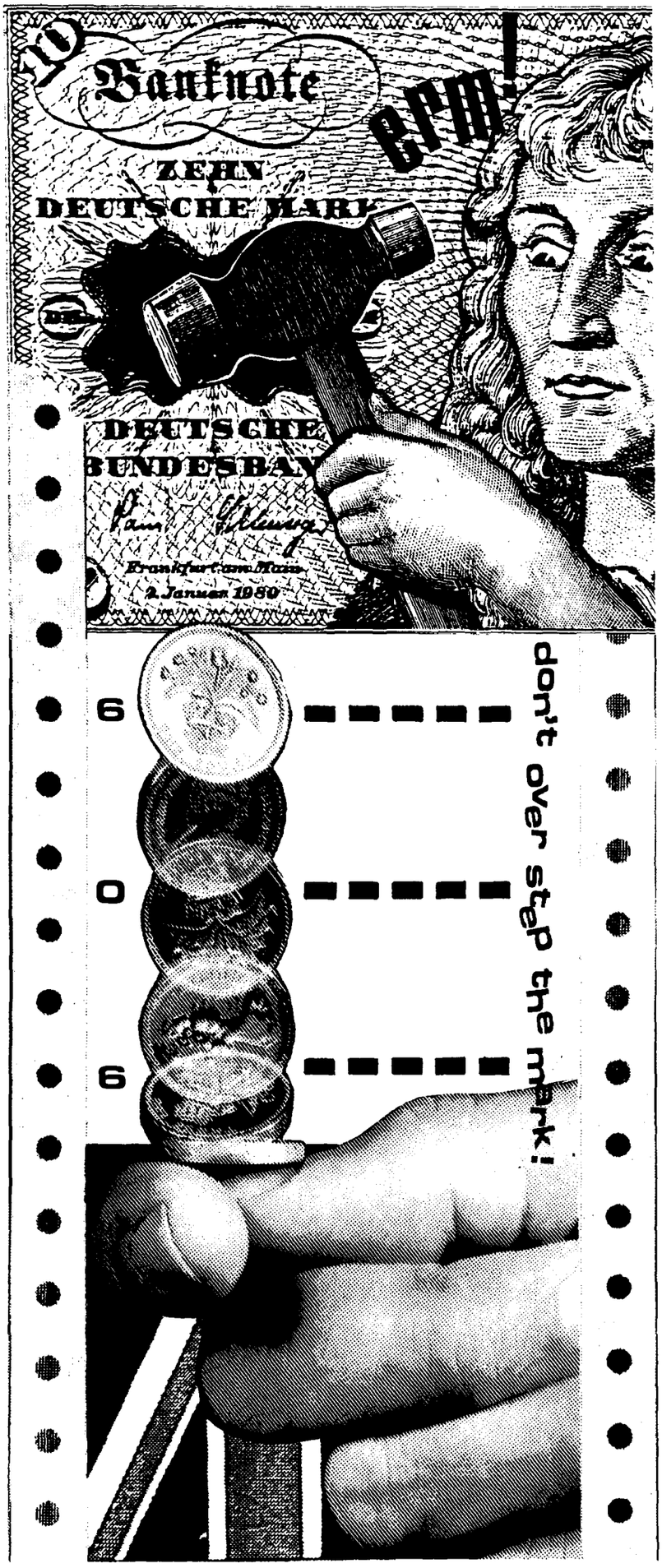

Illustration: Paul Bateman

'Loss of autonomy is like a penalty for the mismanagement of economic policy'

The possibility of devaluation is an open secret, although every effort will be made to avoid it before the next election, since it will erode consumer spending power and accelerate inflation. The rules of ERM, moreover, restrict and complicate devaluation. Exchange-rate changes within the ERM cannot be decided unilaterally by individual member states – they require agreement by all participating countries. Recently, the members of the system have been trying to delay currency realignments and limit their size. They have avoided exchange-rate adjustments which fully compensate for inflation in order to tighten constraints on high-inflation countries. This is a logical way of increasing confidence in the system by showing that exchange rates will only change slowly and deliberately. It also prepares the way for full monetary union in the Community, which would mean fixing exchange rates irrevocably and thus, in effect, moving to a single currency.

The rules of the ERM, however, will produce serious difficulties for Britain if it has to devalue the pound. Only limited devaluation will be accepted, and even that will be conditional on other policies such as restraints on public spending. The result is likely to be even more dependence on the EC. It will no longer be possible to pursue, independently, an expansionist programme of modernisation and investment. Britain will increasingly have to bargain with other EC countries for investment resources, public and private.

Thus, in future, Britain will have to accept tight constraints on its monetary policy. In a way, it will be like an economically backward region of a larger economy – it will be unable to influence the interest rates and inflation rates that prevail in the larger unit, but will instead have to negotiate for any increase in its share of resources.

Some attempt has been made, by Conservatives, to present ERM membership as a relaunch of the original drive against inflation in the early years of Thatcherism. The pound is now tied, permanently so it is asserted, to the D-mark with its world reputation for stability. We are on a 'D-mark standard' which will prevent inflationary increases in costs and prices and will re-establish tight economic discipline. In principle these claims could be true. In practice they inspire little credence – especially in view of the impending election with all its inflationary temptations. Over the last 10 years, the Netherlands has fought inflation by linking the guilder to the D-mark at a fixed rate. Only one small devaluation of the guilder has taken place and every change in German monetary policy is now matched by the Netherlands, so that the Dutch central bank is now almost a branch of the Bundesbank. This record has gradually convinced investors that the Dutch and German currencies are virtually the same thing. The pound has a long way to go

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before it has a similar reputation.

The attitude of British ministers, especially Margaret Thatcher, to the ERM suggests a different interpretation. They do not display satisfaction with a triumphantly relaunched strategy. They seem more like the owners of a small company, once proudly independent, who have accepted takeover by a European conglomerate rather than go bust.

The most important economic decisions of the Thatcher period have been exercises of monetary policy and have depended on Britain possessing full monetary sovereignty. The recession of 1980-81, which profoundly altered the economic landscape, was the result of a sharp shift towards monetary restriction. The resulting high exchange rate squeezed industry while high interest rates encouraged the expansion of the banking sector. The Lawson boom of 1983-88 was based on a gradual shift to much easier money, reducing interest rates and letting sterling depreciate. According to most economic opinion, these dramatic swings in policy were ill-judged, but they certainly had potent effects. They are now a thing of the past because the instruments of national monetary policy have to be set according to the disciplines of the ERM.

This loss of autonomy is like a penalty for the mismanagement of national economic policy. Perhaps Britain would eventually have joined ERM, even if Margaret Thatcher's economic experiment had been a brilliant success, but the circumstances of our participation make it like being rescued from the immediate consequences of failure. Although there was a brief period in the mid-80s when the British government enjoyed enormous prestige on the continent and started to set the policy agenda for the EC as a whole, Thatcherism was never fully accepted by conservative forces in other member countries. Thatcherism is basically a British project – it aims at national economic renewal by a radical strategy within Britain, and monetary policy has been at the heart of the strategy.

In this sense ERM membership symbolises a decline in Thatcherism, even if Thatcher remains in office. There is even an analogy with the introduction of west German marks into east Germany. Like the east Germans, Britain obtained a measure of stability in a critical situation by accepting an external monetary discipline, but, like east Germany, this acceptance saddled British companies with uncompetitive cost and price structures which can no longer be corrected by a unilateral change in the exchange rate. The loss of autonomy in Britain is of course much less extreme, but it is significant and the obvious disappointment of Thatcher and her closest supporters is understandable.

There will probably be further shifts of economic control from Britain to the Community, because the EMS itself will change. The Commission and its president Jacques Delors are promoting the goal of monetary union. This would mean replacing the present system, which stabilises exchange rates among different national currencies, by a single European monetary unit, issued by a European central banking system which would absorb national central banks such as the Bank of England.

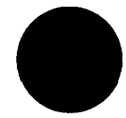
It is not clear whether this drive for monetary union will succeed. Rapid monetary integration would present serious difficulties not just for Britain but for all the weak economies in the EC. They would no longer be able to expand credit to accelerate economic development, nor could they devalue their currencies to encourage exports or to compensate for inflation. In September, a meeting of EC finance ministers expressed doubts on rapid monetary unification, with the Spanish minister in particular pointing to the difficulties involved.

More generally, there are now uncertainties about the future of the Community as a whole. In recent years, the two most important EC initiatives have been the single European Act, passed by member parliaments in 1986, which strengthened Community institutions, and its subsequent 1992 programme for a single market, which pushed forward economic integration (although to nothing like the extent promised by the accompanying publicity). Both these measures were relatively successful, but they have now exhausted most of their initial impetus. Meanwhile, the collapse of socialism in eastern Europe and the USSR has completely transformed the context of the integration project. It no longer makes sense, for example, to regard the Community as the 'second pillar' of the Western alliance.

There is no single agreed perspective for the EC in these changed circumstances. French strategy is for a new and ambitious phase of institutional construction within the existing Community. A powerful European central bank is one aspect of this approach; another is a new drive for political unification. Both issues will be discussed at intergovernmental conferences, on EMU and political union in December. The French aim to build a powerful supranational entity, which can play a big role on the world stage. They envisage important interventions by the EC on Third World debt, world monetary reform, and the reconstruction of the ex-socialist countries. The EC would become, if not a rival to the US, at least an equal partner to it, with comparable weight in world affairs.

The German government, on the other hand, is much less enthusiastic about radical institutional change. It is strong enough not to feel the need for the EC as a way of playing an active world role and, as a successful exporter, it is less interested in a reconstruction of the world economic order. For historical, geographic and economic reasons, Germany seems uniquely well-placed to benefit from the emerging capitalist economies of the East. In the monetary sphere, Germany already has predominance as the only member of the EMS able to influence exchange rates between the US dollar and European currencies. Monetary union would deprive Germany of important policy instruments. It has resisted institutional change in this area for the last 10 years.

'Like the east Germans, Britain obtained a measure of stability by accepting external monetary discipline'



Nevertheless, neither France nor Germany will insist on its own national position to the point of endangering the close relations between the two countries. France will moderate its ambitions, while Germany will accept further institutional change including a European central bank, if it is given guarantees against a return to inflationary policies. Other EC members have varied interests but remain basically committed to the integration project. Smaller north European countries such as Belgium or Holland already have very close economic relations with France and Germany. The EC gives them some influence over economic forces which would otherwise be beyond their control. The low-income Mediterranean members of the Community are relying on integration with the north to stimulate economic growth. Inside the EC they benefit from regional and industrial support rather than being completely dependent on private investment flows.

Thus, most members of the Community remain committed to its further development, although the pattern of that development is not clear. Specific initiatives may well fail. For example, attempts by the EC to regulate labour market behaviour have failed in the past. On two occasions the community has failed in efforts to construct strong monetary institutions and this could happen again, even though all members except Britain accept monetary union in principle. Nonetheless, the EC has displayed an impressive ability to adapt to major economic and political changes and to redefine the integration project in ways which preserve its relevance to member countries. For example, there are already efforts to map out a role for the Community, as a unit, in east European recovery.

Britain faces difficult political choices, both in its general relations with the EC and on the specific question of monetary union. Thatcher herself, and those closest to her, are inclined to press for much looser, all-European structures which would embrace the re-emerging market economies of the East. The perspective would be a much larger, but centralised, Community acting essentially as a free-trade zone and without extensive supranational powers. It is ironic that it used to be the Left which advocated pan-European structures as an alternative to the EC, but such an approach is unlikely to be any more successful in the hands of the Right. Other member states are unlikely to accept this kind of dilution of the Com-

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munity. They will accept east European countries into the EC, but not until they are much stronger economically.

An alternative, opposing strategy would be to align British policies much more closely with those of France and to press for a stronger, more centralised Community. Many Conservatives take this position on the view that Britain has no long-term future as a sovereign state and that it is better to share power within the EC than to accept a de facto German hegemony. Thus, monetary union may seem preferable to the existing ERM which is so dominated by Germany as to constitute, in practice, a D-mark zone.

These are difficult strategic issues and they are made all the more difficult by the Britain's frequent refusal – under Thatcher but also under previous prime ministers – to accept existing Community rules and structures. The fact that Britain refused to accept the ERM for 10 years and only joined in an emergency will not enhance our influence when the future of the monetary system is being discussed. Official British contributions to the debate on monetary union have been unconvincing. To deflect the drive for a European central bank and a common currency the Treasury has come up with two different, and quite inconsistent, alternatives. First, unrestricted competition between national currencies and then, when this scheme received no support, the issue of a new parallel currency, the 'hard ecu', alongside national currencies. These schemes were ad hoc responses to proposals for monetary union and did not express a well-thought-out strategic position.

For Britain, the best outcome of the debate would probably be to delay the introduction of a single currency but to accept a supranational system of central banks with control over monetary policy in member states. This would avoid a sudden and disruptive shift from entrenched high rates of inflation to much lower rates with a common currency. Even before the common currency was introduced, the European central bank system could take over responsibility for the overall direction of monetary policy on the EC – by setting the general level of interest rates or the average value of European currencies against the dollar. At present these policy choices are made, in practice, in Germany, and without too much concern for the interest of other members. A supranational monetary authority would have to balance the interests of different member states and would be preferable to German hegemony.

Britain today, however, is not well placed to assert its own positions within the Community. There is an often-repeated cycle. We begin by dismissing some EC initiative; polemics continue while the costs of our exclusion increase and become more obvious; in the end there is a humiliating acceptance of new structures when it is too late to have any influence on the way they work. A good example is Britain's refusal last December to sign the Social Charter of employment rights which were accepted by the other 11 members. At the time, this may have seemed an easy gesture, since the Charter was only a declaration with no legal force. The Commission, however, has followed up the Charter with an extensive action programme of new labour-market and employment policies, including legislation. How much credibility will British representatives now have in the negotiations around the action programme? It will be difficult to press for detailed revisions to measures which have already been rejected in principle. On the other hand, Britain is bound to be affected by the resulting changes in European labour markets.

'Difficulties in our European relations reflect a more general failure to address Britain's long term economic problems'

These difficulties in our European relations have been particularly marked under Thatcher, but they certainly did not begin with her. Basically they reflect a more general failure to address Britain's long-term economic problems. Lack of commitment to the EC is of a piece with the failure to make other necessary long-term investments, in industrial modernisation or in better education. The case of ERM entry seems typical. Once again short-term considerations have prevailed and there is no coherent long-run strategy for our monetary relations with the EC.●

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After ERM

Pragmatism Rules, OK?

Entry into the ERM could just deliver a fourth term for the Tories. But **Charlie Leadbeater** anticipates more profound changes

If the politics of conviction were the mark of the 1980s, the symbol of politics in the 1990s will be Euro-pragmatism. Politics in the 1980s unleashed passion, imagination and ideas, mainly from the Right, to change society. In the 1990s politics will be about technocratic, gradual, unambitious adjustments to circumstances. Party politics in the 1980s was organised around Thatcherism's ideological dominance of the political agenda. In the 1990s it will be much more closely fought between two more equally matched, managerial parties.

The dominant Tory politics of the 1980s was of a resurgent British spirit, the Falklands and the rediscovery of great Victorian virtues. The spirit of the 1990s will be of Britain dependent upon others in Europe, pooling sovereignty and reluctantly acknowledging that economically it trails in Germany's wake.

British politics is in the midst of a slow evolution. Beneath the battle in the polls, with Labour resurgent and the Tories fighting back, a more subtle but no less important shift is taking place. Regardless of who happens to be leading in the polls, the terms of political debate, the parameters of political possibility are changing. Politics has become progressively less ideological and less ambitious, more pragmatic and careful, with the only excitement provided by spectacle and scandal rather than ideas and imagination.

The television evening news on Friday October 5 was emblematic of this quiet transformation. From Blackpool we had the Labour Party rounding off a successful – that is to say tame and energy-less – conference with a song foisted upon it by its marketing advisers. It capped a week of controlled, neatly-dressed, spectacle: something to window shop rather than feel stirred by. But just as Peter Mandelson was packing away his mannequins for the last time, so the Tories were planning to upstage him.

With exquisite timing at 4.00pm that afternoon, John Major, the chancellor, announced Britain would be entering the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System. There was just enough time for the financial markets to rally and for tv news producers to elbow Labour into the dying minutes of the bulletins.

As a political gesture the ERM announcement could not be faulted and not surprisingly most attention has focused on its short-term political ramifications. After months of division, defensiveness and evasion over Europe and the ERM the Tories are back in the driving seat. They may yet crash. But they are back on the move again after the intense self-doubt of the spring. Major's move has given the Tories the same sense of momentum they got from their 1986 conference, when a battery of ministers rolled out the agenda for the next few years.

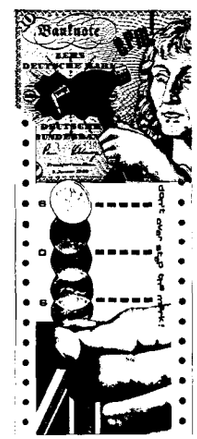
It has pulled at least part of the rug from beneath the Labour Party. It struck at the heart of Labour's economic policy. For months Labour had benefited from Tory division over Europe, Thatcher's distaste for European integration, and proclaimed it's economic policy distinctive because it revolved around ERM membership. By 4.05pm that day much of what had sustained Labour's attack on the Tories had been repossessed by the bailiffs.

Most significantly, Britain's entry sounded the starting gun for the race for the next general election, with a great deal riding on how the economy responds to the discipline of ERM membership and developments in the Gulf. ERM entry could allow a sustained cut in interest rates. Combined with falling inflation and give-aways with electricity privatisation, the electorate could take Major to its heart after letting him replenish their pockets. Labour's poll lead could erode rapidly.

But the decision to go into the ERM is not just significant for its effect on the parties' standing in the polls. The ERM mini-series will tell us something very important about how the character of British politics has changed since the mid-1980s. It could also be a defining moment, laying the foundations for what politics could be about, how it could be conducted, for the next decade. The character of British politics is evolving. ERM entry will be central to its evolution.

In assessing the significance of the ERM decision it is worth recalling the political changes which were unleashed by the economic upheaval of the recession a decade ago. How politics changed in that period will help us piece together how the character of British politics is likely to develop in the early 1990s. For the recession of 1979-81 was just such a defining moment, when a savage economic downturn combined with an abrupt change in economic policy and a new set of political priorities. Those years laid the foundations for much of the politics in the remainder of the decade.

'Entry into ERM marks the end of the experiment with monetarism in one country'



First, it was the political equivalent of the Torrey Canyon disaster for social democratic politics. The badly holed, political super tanker was finally pushed onto the rocks to break up. Social democracy plunged into the waves. It has only surfaced in the last couple of years. Second, the break with the past changed the terms of what was politically possible in dealing with the British malaise. The economic and political shock of the early 1980s was the breach through which flowed trade-union reform and privatisation. It ushered in a deeply ideological period of politics dominated by the Tories. Could ERM entry, combined with the mini-recession which will probably come next year, provide just such a catalyst to transform politics into the 1990s? In a way it will, but it will be far less dramatic than the early 1980s.

A decade has made an enormous difference to politics. The recession of 1979-81 was marked by an intense ideological debate between monetarists and Keynesians. It was because the recession was accompanied by this debate that the political and economic consequences in later years were so radical. Thatcherism emerged as the driving force around which the rest of British politics had to reorganise.

In contrast the downturn of 1990 and the abrupt shift in economic policy with ERM entry, has been accompanied by hardly any grand economic debate at all. There has been great drama with the row over Professor Walters and the Lawson resignation. There has been a slanging match over whether and when Britain was going to enter the ERM. But no great debate about why the economy is in a mess, the alternative cures and the aims of economic policy.

The debate which accompanied the recession of 1979-81 was a grand clash of economic ideologies. The debate of

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the last year has been point scoring. As a result, by definition, there will be no great ideological breach through which one or other of the parties will rush to stamp their mark on the decade. There is little to choose between Labour and Tory ideas on economic management, save for Labour's vague ideas of credit controls and its embryonic ideas on industrial policy. This does not signal a return to consensus politics. But it may well mean that the 1980s could stand out as an aberration when British politics was dominated by high ideology rather than pragmatic calculation. Rather than attempting to shape the world, from now on politics will be very much about adjusting to it.

This reversion from ideology back to pragmatism in the course of the decade is evident in what the ERM decision says about the state of Tory politics. Just as the recession of 1979-81 vanquished much of postwar social democracy, so entry into the ERM also knocks the immediate past on the head. In seeking to secure the next election, John Major has surely marked the end of Thatcherism as we have known it. It is an acceptance that after 10 years of drastic remedies Britain cannot cure its inflation problem alone. More, it is an admission that the mixture of widening home-ownership, financial deregulation to promote personal borrowing and a more decentralised process of pay bargaining, has created a potent inflationary cocktail.

Entry into a semi-fixed system of exchange rates, which set a managed framework for the market, marks the end of the experiment with monetarism in one country, and possibly of neo-liberalism in one country as well. Far from neo-liberalism creating a British economic miracle and the resurgence of Anglo-Saxon capitalism as a model for the rest of the world, we are supplicants to Europe to help us cure our inflation. The Treasury and the Bank of England have been joined as managers of the British economy by the Bundesbank. We are tied to German capitalism, which is regulated and corporatist where Thatcher has deregulated and let free markets flourish.

If the Tories win the next election it will have nothing to do with the sweep of Thatcher's vision, and everything to do with Major's careful counting of the pennies. The third term has turned into a disaster. Electricity privatisation has been a fiasco of mismanagement, the poll tax a hated imposition and the social agenda to transform health, welfare and education has got nowhere. Thatcherism is ideologically exhausted and politically bankrupt.

Thatcherism is increasingly hemmed in, both by Labour's renewal and by leading Tories such as Patten, Hurd and Major who recognise the need for a different style and touch. Yet despite this, politics has not broken out on to new ground. It is as if Thatcherism is becoming no more than a shell for British politics, but the new politics is not strong enough to break out.

There are several reasons why there is little prospect of either party creating a set of new ideas and values around which political debate will turn. Thatcherism's achievements should not be underestimated. Some of the most important, such as trade union reform and privatisation, will not be undone for a long time. Much of what was once controversial now goes uncontested.

Labour's renewal is largely devoid of striking new ideas. There are plenty of reasonable, sensible policies. There are suggestions of themes, about the role of citizenship and the state, which could be developed. But it has been a policy revolution born of adjustment to political circumstance rather than one inspired by imaginative thinking. It is worth recalling the sense of depression which swept through the Labour leadership after the 1987 election. Labour's renewal is still recent and fragile.

Because it is not setting out radical ideas, Labour's hopes of coming to power rest on the Tories' exhaustion and mismanagement of the economy. Its only chance of winning office rests on it inheriting an economy in a mess. Aware of this, John Smith and Gordon Brown are in no position to make promises about the bounty which would lie in store. A Labour victory won thanks to Tory economic calamity is not an appealing prospect.

The Tories are in just as difficult a position. A trawl of ideas from right-wing think-tanks has only yielded more suggestions for privatisation and a downgrading of the monarchy. There are few new radical ideas on offer. Hurd and Major are preoccupied with managing Thatcherism's decline to make sure it damages the Tories as little as possible while it crumbles. They are not in the business of setting any new radical agendas.

But the new pragmatism does not just reflect a change in party politics. It is also a result of a change in the subject-matter of politics in the last few years. This change in the content of politics has predisposed the parties towards pragmatism rather than conviction. The first and most powerful is the European trajectory of British politics. Over the last 15 years Europe has steadily become an increasingly insistent focus for British politics. Entry into the ERM is the most significant step in that process of integration since membership of the European Community in the early 1970s. ERM membership is not just a vague ideal or an arcane directive, but a tangible, painful economic disipline which will not work unless we accept our dependence on our partners. As Europe becomes more central, we have to accept a pooling of sovereignty, that we cannot go it alone. That predisposes politics more towards negotiation with partners. The closer we draw to Europe the more we have to accept both our dependence on others, and also their right to be different from us. Our gradual acclimatisation to Europe promotes an acceptance of limited pluralism.

Both parties are engaging in a pragmatic adjustment to Europeanisation, gradually dropping their different objections to integration. Everyone knows politics has only one direction to go in, towards Europe. Yet the amazing thing is that neither party is able to grasp the moment and the mood, with the strategic vision which would make Britain a really central player in European politics.

Their tentativeness is only partly a reflection of a much wider uncertainty in British society about our position in Europe. Society is moving faster towards Europe, from the packed commuter flights to the continent each day to the environmental standards we expect, than the politicians. Thatcherism rose to power by grasping an historic turning point, the collapse of the post-war settlement. It is still up for grabs: which, if either, of the parties is capable of grasping the political potential of Europeanisation?

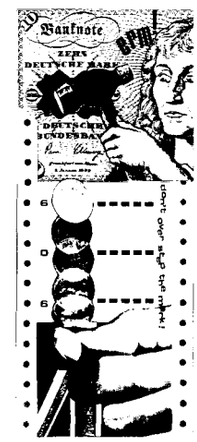
The second factor is that politics is much more complex than it was a decade ago. The recession of 1979-81 defined the terms for politics in the succeeding years because the state of the British economy was such an overriding preoccupation, which crystallised a wide set of concerns about how the country was governed. The economic malaise could also be credibly addressed by a rather simple, related set of remedies, monetary restraint and public spending cuts, privatisation and union reform.

Now political preoccupations are much wider, more complex and less susceptible to apparently simple solutions. The state of the economy is not so urgent nor so uncontestably central to politics. It has been joined by Europe, concern over the environment and the emerging shape of the new international order, as the political issues which will dominate the 1990s. Environmental despoliation and the reshaping of international relations may provoke strong passions, but it is difficult to persuade people they can be dealt with by simple remedies first learnt in a grocer's shop.

Whether or not Labour wins the next election the character of politics is in the midst of quite a change. Instead of the 'great moving right show' which heralded Thatcherism's radical reforms, we have 'the great moving carefully show' which heralds the rise of the managerial class of politicians of the 1990s. The days when people could sit in front of the television growing enraged by Tory radicalism or Labour dogma have gone. Instead of throwing our slippers at the likes of Norman Tebbit or Eric Heffer, we will be forced to wonder at the respectable, trustworthy, cautious, grey bunch who will be gracing our screens, seeking our votes and sending us to sleep.●

Charlie Leadbeater is the industrial editor of the Financial Times.

'The spirit of the 1990s will be of Britain dependent upon others in Europe'



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Seen But Not Heard

The Rochdale and Nottingham cases have revealed widespread sexual abuse of children based on satanic practices. Yet the children are still not believed. **Beatrix Campbell**, presenter of the recent *Dispatches* programme on the Nottingham case, explains why

The politics of childhood detonates party, political, class and cultural categories like no other cause could. The phenomenon of children as an endangered species has simultaneously animated and immobilised all political tendencies. The politics of childhood has oscillated between the Right and Left. The genesis of the Hell's Granny, the law and order freak who stalks the corridors of Conservative power with a hankie and a noose, lies in her ferocious resistance, *on behalf of children*, to liberal law reform. The hanger and flogger has lived in the child molester's shadow. A politics of punishment is produced here as a response to the failure to protect.

For liberals and socialists, for whom revenge and the culture of legitimate brutality is part of the problem not the solution, the abuse of children has often seemed adrift. It is precariously anchored either in a politics of class and poverty (when it comes to economics, children are *always* innocent) or in the fact that childhood is the paradigm of the problem of power, children are literally powerless.

But these political traditions carry their rhetoric before them – it does not fall to them actually to take care of children, and so their interventions are framed by ideology rather than practice. Which often means they don't know what they're talking about.

Not surprisingly, and sometimes despite their ideology, voluntary agencies, together with state specialists, pioneer new consciousness about children's oppression because it is they who do the work, they are the *public parents* of children at risk.

Feminist politics has always linked the empowerment of women with the empowerment of children. But there's a flaky, nay rather fundamentalist feminism around, which has found it as hard as everyone else to cope with the latest discoveries about the oppression of children. To defend the discovery that the biggest single category of child abuser is the child's father within the family, they and others deny the significance of new evidence which locates child abuse not only within the family but without. Their alibi: it's all a diversion from the real culprits, the father and the family. This complaint is ideological and unencumbered by empirical engagement, and thus it encourages the dread that child abuse will once again be allocated to the weird and the wacky, to the random, the inexplicable and the unpredictable. This defence hasn't been hearing what children have been trying to tell.

Workers responsible for children have had to turn themselves inside out to assimilate the phenomenon of child battering, and then that of widespread sexual abuse within the family. Once the appropriate structures of care were in place, they uncovered evidence of *organised* abuse of children, like sex rings which depend on children 'recruiting' each other for perpetrators whose protection is not so much family as the community. And now they have to contemplate the latest horror story, ritualised sexual abuse, a culture of sexual terrorism, power and sacrifice.

I well recall when someone said to me a couple of years ago, 'you know what'll be next? Satanism and witchcraft.' 'Oh no,' I thought, 'that's for the *News Of The World*'. I didn't know anything about it, and didn't want to, because like many, I'm aware of a tendency to only ask questions for which there's an answer to hand. But ritual abuse of children pushes the boundaries of all our beliefs. It is a real measure of the balance of power in society, not only between adults and children, but between the institutions and the children's advocates. It puts to the test our promises to protect children. What has been arresting about the last few months and the Rochdale row has been that it has once again become respectable to call children liars.

Organised and ritualised abuse of children depends, if not on the family, then on the community. We have come to share a sentimental view of the *community* as a social structure somehow immune from the problem of power and oppression. We see the community as an open secret. Like the family, it becomes an icon of collective hearth and home. Unlike the family, we seem to think it can be called to account because it is a public, rather than a private place. But what the expansion of our knowledge about child abuse reveals is that the community is complicit, that the community, like the family, is where child abuse lives. Bizarre and bloody things happen there. So the problem is not, as some suggest, that the stranger in the park is being resurrected in a new moral panic. The problem is that unless and until some equivalent communal resistance is mobilised on the side of children and their advocates then their disclosures will always be disavowed.

A growing archive of children's evidence is telling us something complex about the geography as well as the demography of child abuse. But we are also now having to learn something new about the *culture* of child abuse. 'Satanic rituals' in a secular culture like ours simply aren't taken seriously, and anyone who respects children's accounts of 'satanic' or ritualised abuse aren't taken seriously either.

It has seemed easy enough for newspapers like the *Independent On Sunday* to target evangelical Christians as the creators of a new witch-hunt. That's what has happened in the Nottingham controversy. A rumour that the foster parents are evangelical Christians has powered a new myth that reports of 'satanic' rituals have been induced from the mouths of babes by the foster parents themselves. Without ever asking them their beliefs, the media, professors and the police casually dismiss the children's advo-

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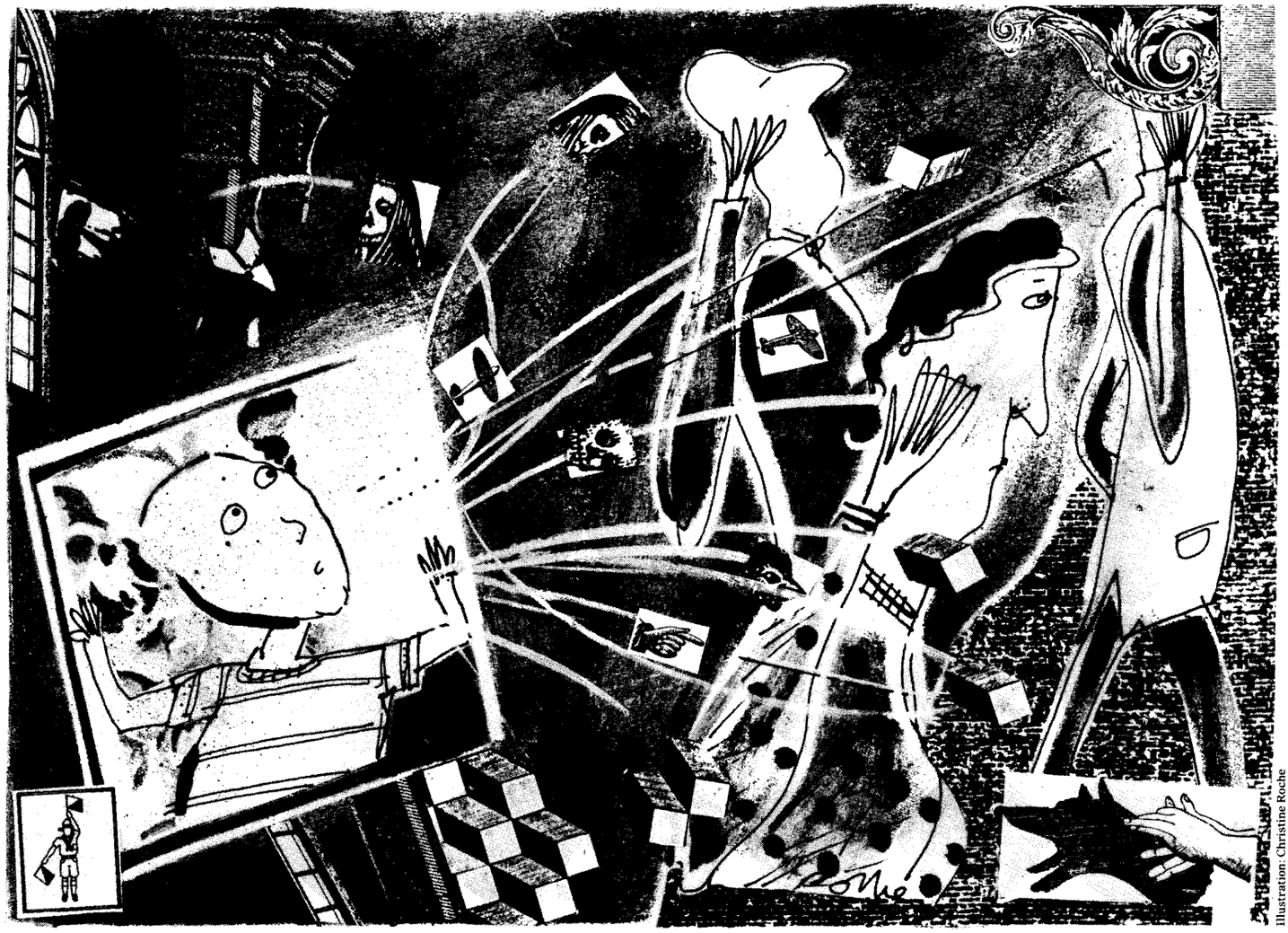

Illustration: Christine Roche

cates as born-again evangelicals who pour their own devilish fantasies into children. Anyone who believes children when they say they're terrified of witches (even when they know they're Uncle X or Auntie Y) is designated as someone who believes in witches. None of the carers involved in the Nottingham case believes in witches. But they believe that the children believe. They believe the children because they've lived with their dread of the terrifying power of people who led them to believe they were witches.

Behind the Nottingham case is an inability to imagine that 'satanic' practices actually happen. But why? The secularism of our society is infused by ambiguous tendencies toward transcendental powers which ought to help us think afresh. Hands up all those who never look for their horoscope when they find *Woman's Own* at the doctor's. When we do that, aren't we searching beyond self-made destiny? Don't most sizeable towns have New Age shops and alternative networks which inhabit the boundary between the material and the mystical? Search any record shop and won't you find pseudo-satanic heavy metallers? All this stuff is *inside* our society. And should we be surprised? Isn't politics itself a wish to transcend the limits of the self by the strength not of the cosmic but by civic collectivity?

Some of the resistance to the phenomenon of the ritual abuse of children balks because it appears to challenge what we've learned about 'ordinary' sexual abuse. For ritual abuse is about spectacle. It is about children in a theatre of sexual terrorism. Ritual abuse challenges the residual wish to believe that sexual abuse is like rape used to be (before the women's liberation movement told it like it was) – an excess of desire, and impetuous combustion, rather than strategic sexual subordination.

If perpetrators are properly understood as planners of sexual abuse, then the fiction of the ceremony is actually a form of coded coercion. Ceremony and ritual can be seen as merely the context in which a sub-culture is shared, the victims' subordination is secured and the power of the perpetrators becomes manifest. It is about the etiquette of oppression. Sub-cultures are no more or less characterised by ritual than any other social formation. It is worth asking when routine becomes ritual in daily life. Routines get us up in the morning, get us fed, watered, washed, waged or whatever. But rituals and ceremonies are the condition of social congregation, whether on the terraces, in traffic, at the tea table, or at prayer. They see us through summit conferences and love affairs, birth and death.

'Satanic rituals in a secular culture like ours aren't taken seriously. Anyone who respects children's accounts of ritualised abuse isn't taken seriously either'

After all, people pray in front of grown men wearing frocks, and presumably to find both peace and power, they consume, metaphorically, the body of a man. So is it so difficult to believe that inversions of that established religion are to be found at large? If grown men are capable of dressing up in pinnies and sharing secret signs with each other in masonic lodges up and down the country, what is so hard about contemplating the prospect of grown men dressing up in daft costumes to invert the meanings of the dominant faith; organising rituals to penetrate any orifice available in troops of little children; to cut open rabbits, or cats, or people, and drink their blood; to shit on silver trays and make the children eat it?

Is the problem really implausibility, or is it that the consequences of these practices are unbearable? After all, to *conceive* of the consequences for children, we have to perform an act of imagination: we have to picture it, and perhaps once we do that we have to put ourselves in the picture, either as perpetrator or as victim. Both are intolerable. But if we don't we can't make sense of it. Who knows what it's all about anyway? Are the rituals described by children designed to confuse the victims? Or to terrify? Is it all part of the belief system, which aims to bring transcendental power to the per-

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petrator? Or is it to guarantee that the victim will be disbelieved?

When the director of social services and the chief constable in Nottinghamshire last year appointed an internal inquiry into persistent allegations by many children of exactly such rituals in several locations, ranging from a council estate to major public properties, the inquiry convinced itself that satanic subcultures in Britain were both disorganised and harmless. What is interesting about that is how they come to that conclusion, and why.

They claimed to have scoured the satanic literature and found nothing to support sexual abuse or sacrifice. Oddly, they didn't discuss that standard text, *Magick*, by the great British satanist, Aleister Crowley, alias the Beast. It is a book that has recently been dropped by its publisher because it was felt to be dangerous. And you only have to turn to the chapter on sacrifice to find out why: it recommends that practice and identifies the perfect victim, a young, innocent, male child.

The inquiry's historical survey, apart from showing shoddy scholarship, simply endorsed the inquiry's prior dismissal of the children's experience. The next question is why: why did the inquiry *need* to believe that there is no satanic sub-culture of sacrifice and sexual abuse? That the children *must* be wrong? The inquiry's perfectly proper scepticism became a mind-set, a belief, a faith, a compulsion to scorn the only evidence we have: the mortal fear and the heroic efforts of more than a dozen terrorised children to share their histories with their new carers, a group of ordinary and simultaneously extraordinary foster mothers.

The inquiry never bothered to meet these women. Nor did it bother to interview women in the special social services unit, Team 4, set up to organise the children's protection. In their absence the inquiry decided that children's stories, meticulously recorded by the foster parents, were induced or invented (brainwashing, according to Professor John Newson, an inquiry advisor). Had he bothered to meet them he would have found a largely secular network of skilled women who lived and worked with these children, day in day out, for more than two years, and who concluded that although they didn't – and still don't – entirely understand the children's evidence, they appreciated that they were trying to share something dreadfully important.

The inquiry chose instead to believe the police, who concluded that the children's allegations about rituals would ruin an impending sexual abuse trial. In the current controversy, much is made of the allegedly uncorroborated nature of the children's statement. But this is not true. The Nottingham children were corroborated by three adult women in the family. Much is made of the argument that there is no evidence of ritual abuse. But what are the children's experience, and the efforts to explain, if not evidence?

'They used the notion of innocence to deny children's experiences, to deny that these terrorised children had something to say'

The police came to believe that what the children were saying was *impossible* and set out to prove it. There's a problem here. Facing up to the unknowableness of what these children actually endured is one thing. Transforming uncertainty and scepticism into a belief in impossibility is quite another. The inquiry and the police abandoned respect for their one source – the children – and came to *believe* in the impossibility of what they did not *know*.

If the police refuse to believe the evidence of children, then they cannot be protected. Indeed, what has become clear in the Cleveland case and in Nottingham is that the police are producing a crisis in child protection work. Politically, the policing of child abuse, like the policing of Northern Ireland, is creating a crisis of democracy. To whom are the police accountable for their failure to carry out not only their statutory obligations but the public's mandate?

We must share some of the responsibility for the crisis, for it derives from the difficulty of detection, from panic in the face of the problem, from resourcelessness. But all that masquerades behind a refusal to do their job. In Nottingham the police seem to have failed to have investigated even the corroborated allegations of organised sexual abuse. It is their job, and theirs alone, to find evidence. What they have done in cases is to squander evidence, ignore it, or demand that the children themselves provide the proof.

We should sympathise – police culture doesn't support individual officers' commitment to children. Police priorities would put resources into surveillance of receivers of stolen goods or cocaine smugglers, but not into strange statements by junk kids from a junk family on a junk housing estate.

Another instrument of the inquiry's repu- diation of the children was the notion of innocence and thus corruptibility. The myth of childhood 'innocence' was mobilised against these children by means of a disingenuous rehabilitation of Freud. The children's stories were reinterpreted not as representations of a reality, but as a response to their 'childhood fantasies'. The inquiry capriciously deployed incompatible notions of childhood (not surprising – none of them were specialists in children). If not filled with fantasy, then the children's innocence implied a blank page easily filled by videos.

They used the very notion of innocence to deny children's experience, to deny that these terrorised children had a history, something real, something to say, which, when they became safe, they risked sharing – despite a dread that they or their carers or their cousins would die.

The inquiry concluded that the children's pace of revelation was proof of their unreliability. They were either making it up for carers who wanted to hear it, or that the carers themselves imported their own imaginings into innocent, and therefore empty, vessels. But because the police and the inquiry didn't believe the children, they didn't apprehend the sense of danger that surrounded these children, and thus they didn't grasp the necessity, yet the difficulty, of disclosure. Nor did they appreciate, therefore, the children's tactics of telling, or their courage in telling.

The children took their time, they made it clear to their foster parents when they had said enough and when they wanted to say more. Reading through the foster parents' diaries of their children's 'disclosures', what becomes clear is that children were sometimes desperate to talk, almost as if they had an agenda: sometimes they were desperate to stop speaking, as if death was never far away: and that and the evidence of their experience got worse as the children got better, especially after they knew that their grandfather and their parents were going to jail. They did their best to make the adults understand. But their *escalating* efforts were mobilised against them. Why hadn't they said it all at once, the inquiry wondered. When did the inquiry last know a child, we wonder.

Because these children were respected by their carers, who endorsed their struggle for survival and selfhood, the carers, too, came to be dismissed by the police and the inquiry as either dupes and suckers, evangelists, or brainwashers. All the progress of the 1980s in transforming the way children and women witnesses alleging sexual crimes have been treated by the police has been undermined by the notion that child witnesses should be treated as if they were the culprits and not the victims.

The discourtesy displayed by the inquiry and the police veil something much more serious. Failure by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service to mobilise prosecutions has left the burden of the evidence with the wardship judges, social workers, foster parents and children themselves. It has encouraged the notion that there is no evidence. That, of course, discounts the children's evidence.

Once again, the problem of policing has confounded the struggle for children's rights. The police defend their practices by weighing children's right to safety against parents' rights to possess their children. And so we have the spectacle of a Labour councillor becoming son of Stuart Bell, crusading for parents whose rights have been curtailed not only by the social services 'gestapo' but by the courts. And yet in Nottingham the chairwoman of social services, also Labour, is endorsing the foster parents and social workers. What divides them is not whether or not they believe satanism exists, but whether or not they respect children. And that's the bit we don't know how to get right.●

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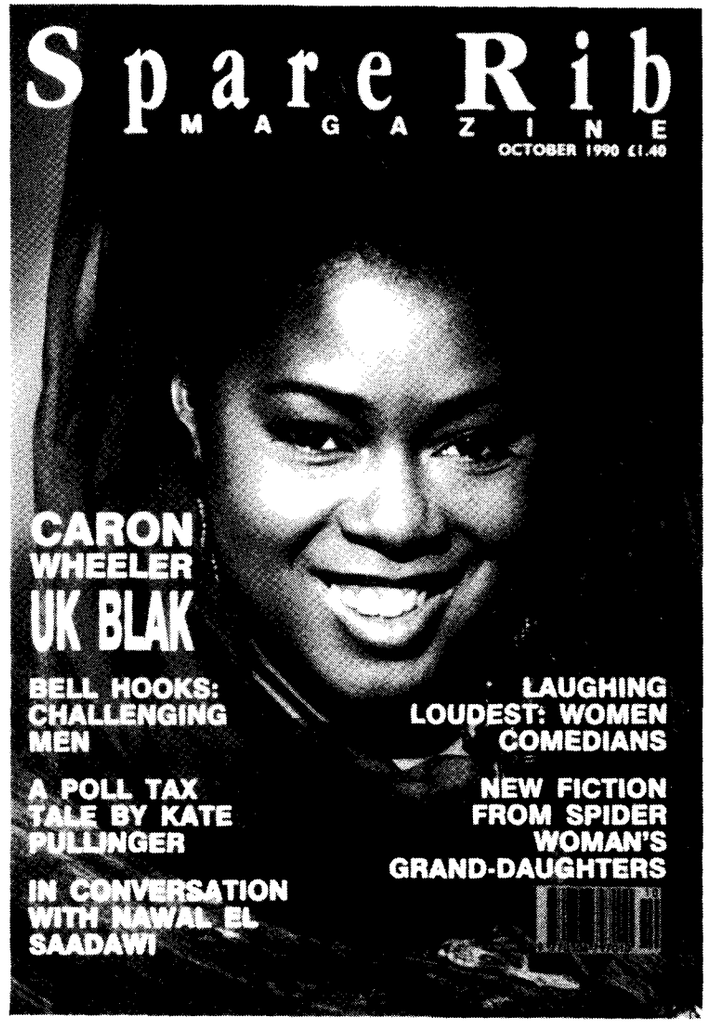

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Greening The State

Meet the new green consensus. All the major parties now subscribe to it. Or do they? **Fred Steward** investigates

Illustration John Morris

The green white paper published in September is the progeny of a green political mutation first observed in a well publicised speech by Margaret Thatcher to the Royal Society in 1988. The Patten Paper *This Common Inheritance* marks the official adaptation of the Conservative government to a new political environment. A peculiar ecological niche inhabited by motley pressure group subspecies has turned into a new green habitat seen as increasingly attractive. Indeed the white paper had competition from the other political documentary species. The Hughes Report from the genus Liberal Democrat and the Gould Report from the genus Labour.

By common consent, the evolution of the Patten Paper had lost several important genes on route. The *Financial Times* summarised it as 'a compendium of muted declarations of hesitant intent'.

Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth dissected the creature in elaborate documents revealing the feebleness of the 350 proposals for action, particularly regarding global warming. Sage Whitehall observers detected blood on the hands of the ministers of transport and energy and on the carpet of the Department of the Environment. The absence of Margaret Thatcher from the birth attracted much comment. The lineage of many of the ideas from ancestors such as the Brundtland Report was mercilessly exposed.

In many ways the focus of these criticisms on the weakness of the practical proposals, and on the lack of originality of the ideas, indirectly revealed the degree to which the new green politics was now uncontested common ground. The new landscape of concepts such as 'sustainability', 'think global act local' and 'the rights of future generations' had come to be seen as natural.

Yet the principles adopted in the Patten Paper signify a profound shift in the definition of the responsibilities of society and the state. Comparisons with Beveridge's conception of the welfare state in 1942 are not entirely fanciful. The Beveridge Report promoted the care of a needy section of society by the more comfortable and enshrined the principle of social provision of 'security' for the individual. The Patten Paper introduces the care of the natural world by humanity and recognises a social responsibility for 'stewardship' of the planet.

This brings to the central political agenda of a modern state the recognition that human society has a 'moral duty' and 'ethical imperative' to respect the rights of Nature. The world is seen as 'small and fragile' and Nature itself is 'under threat'. In other words, the concepts of limits of the biosphere, the interdependence of ecological systems and critical thresholds of environmental stability are all accepted as the new ground rules.

The new rules lead to new goals. Although economic growth is still seen as virtuous, long-term 'sustainable development' replaces simplistic objectives of short-term expansion. Although science has a positive role, the 'precautionary principle' of action to avoid catastrophe in the face of uncertainty takes precedence over conclusive scientific proof.

This new consensus shifts 'the environment' from its ghetto as a narrow aspect of government policy concerned with pollution control and nature conservation to an issue permeating the whole of economic and social life. It requires action at all levels: from the individual to the global, from the street corner to the stratosphere. Transport, energy, industry, lifestyle, consumption are all subsumed within its orbit. These key principles are hardly the exclusive property of the white paper but their adoption as official government policy is significant. With variations of emphasis they are embraced by both Labour and Liberal Democrats.

Their adoption has not been a simple matter for any part of the political spectrum. Although rhetoricians of the different parties are keen to show continuity of the new outlook with their past, quite a lot of ideological baggage has had to be discarded. Central has been the undermining of the earlier 'industrialist' consensus with its optimistic and expansionist notions of economic and technological progress. No party now presents this view with the simple confidence of earlier times.

The combination of collective purpose and individual responsibility expressed by the green movement has also had its effect. The acceptance of the need for these different dimensions of action has shaken traditional stances. The Conservatives have reintroduced a positive role for the state while Labour has reinstated the individual as the key actor in social change.

In practical terms the burden of this shift has been on the government. Although emphasising the diffusion of environmental responsibility throughout society, the white paper has to acknowledge the inadequacy of the market left to itself to deal with the environment. It concedes that 'some market signals are distorted or ineffective' and 'government's job' is to rectify them. Whether through taxes or regulation, the principle is accepted of a growing rather than declining role for the state.

All the signs are that on this occasion Margaret Thatcher's instinct for entering and reshaping new political ground deserted her. The reason is surely ideological. When it came to the crunch, the cabinet did not have the stomach for the enhanced interventionism that the green principles implied. As a consequence instead of capturing the green terrain, the government rendered itself more exposed. It gave greater legitimacy to a territory in which it is uncomfortable.

To pursue the analogy with the origins of the welfare state, the principles of the Patten Paper imply the creation of a green state. Such a state would not only accept a collective responsibility for nature but requires a transformation of its relationship with the society at large and with the international sphere. It involves the assumption of a new sovereignty concerning nation and nature, but also the transfer of sovereignty to new arenas and agents: global and individual, regional and local, representa-

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tive of nature as well as of society.

Yet the proposals made for changes in how government operates in no way correspond to the profundity and the urgency of the new political agenda that it identifies. The architect of the new welfare state, Beveridge, argued that 'a revolutionary moment in the world's history is a time for revolutions, not for patching'. That is, a shake up of traditional administrative structures was required to embed new principles and priorities within government. If one takes seriously the argument presented by the white paper that the future of the planet is at stake then this too is such a revolutionary moment. Yet the challenge to create a new institutional framework with the capacity to integrate such a diverse range of issues within the new guidelines of sustainability, stewardship and survival is ducked.

A key message of the Patten Paper is that environmental issues cross the normal boundaries of every government department. They therefore need co-ordination and adequate status to compete with other departmental objectives. The solution offered in the white paper is the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee within the cabinet. To function, it is contingent on a consistent champion and is vulnerable to switches in portfolios. It also runs the danger of being stifled by sectional interests. Convincing measures for integration are lacking. Even the minimalist proposals for unification of pollution inspectorates and conservation agencies are shunned.

A combination of Thatcherite hostility to new state institutions and civil service conservatism seems to have ruled out a radical new expression of the environmental interest within government. Yet history suggests that unless a clear area of responsibility is identified and given some permanence within the state itself, the prospects for its growth and strategic impact are slender.

Equally the transfer of sovereignty to new actors outside the traditional state is only pursued half-heartedly. A fuller role for individuals and groups is recognised and the need for wider access to information conceded. However, the need to give more substantive standing to those groups which have championed the environmental interest causes difficulty. Traditional politics deals with pressure groups as representing sectional interests and government ranks them by status.

The main green organisations have developed characteristics and a range of concerns which go way beyond the traditional pressure group role, yet the government cannot shake off its inbuilt reflexes. The white paper itself seeks to play the traditional game by pointedly omitting any reference to Greenpeace and patronisingly granting Friends of the Earth a role restricted to local newspaper recycling. Such an approach fails to take on board the new and continuing role of such organisations in representing the interests of nature within the political system and the society at large.

Rather than moving the green debate on to Thatcherite ground, the white paper has opened up a new political space for debate on the nature of the green state. This is about new political institutions and policy instruments. It is also about new legal rights and powers within society at large. New ministries and agencies, legal principles and courts, taxes and regulations, rights to information and forms of representation have been thrown into the melting pot.

The other political parties have entered this debate. On the issue of integration and status of environmental issues within government, the Hughes Report of the Liberal Democrats offers an alternative. It pursues the logic of a separation of powers within government between those concerned with producer interests and those concerned with environmental consequences. Whether in Food and Agriculture, Energy, Transport, Industry or Employment there is currently overlap and confusion between the promotion of producer interests and the effective representation of the environmental interest. Far better that the environmental aspect of these different departments were consolidated and brought together with a new high status Ministry of Environmental Protection.

Interestingly, the Labour Party's Gould Report follows a different path, partly on the practical grounds of the time and difficulty of ministry upheaval. It shares Patten's notion of co-ordination through cabinet committee but combines it with the introduction of a range of new independent agencies. Modelled on the Health and Safety Commission and on the US agencies, these would operate outside of government and deal with a range of issues from environmental protection to food safety. These agencies would have developed powers and would include representatives of environmental groups. An array of strong and enforceable new legal measures on environmental rights and freedom of information would provide a positive context for their activities.

In many ways Labour seems to have taken the pitfalls of statism to heart. The need to decentralise and empower institutions in the society at large is given a more prominent place in its conception of the green state than the more classical concerns of integration and ministerial responsibility.

Accompanying the debate over political institutions is one over policy instruments. This has been clouded by a 'phoney war' between the so-called 'regulatory' and 'market' approaches to policy. The 'market' approach espoused by the white paper represents a new emphasis on the use of green taxes and fiscal measures promoted in the report commissioned by the DoE from the economist David Pearce.

Nevertheless the key point is its acceptance of the need for government to influence the behaviour of individuals and businesses in order to effectively pursue a collective goal. So long as this is honestly acknowledged, rather than obscured by ideological point-scoring, there are many interesting experiments to be pursued in the adoption of new instruments for the pursuit of green goals. The Liberal Democrats go for a pollution added tax. Labour's document explores the role of pollution permits and adopts the most forthright pragmatic stance of horses for courses, with a choice of taxes or regulations, depending on circumstances. Tax cuts were very effective in switching petrol consumption to unleaded. Regulation may offer the best controls over the introduction of dangerous chemicals into the environment.

'The momentum for change will probably continue to be expressed via the green movement and driven by the international context'

The current array of environmental policy statements heralds a continuing debate on the green state. Since the Patten Paper shrinks from the administrative revolution implied by its own principles, it has delivered a golden opportunity for the political opposition to embrace the new consensus and translate it into a programme of general political reform as well as a list of stronger specific measures. Whether the parties will rise to this opportunity is uncertain.

As the conception of the green state itself implies, the focus for influence and change is not simply within the traditional spheres of party or government. In reality the momentum for change will probably continue to be expressed via the green movement and driven by the international context. Increased political status has inevitably been conceded by government to the green movement, with all its diversity and unorthodoxy.

The green movement presents an interesting mix of a universalist philosophy and a tenacious activism on a host of specific issues. By moving on to its broad territory the government has exposed itself to the battery of expertise and zeal that the green campaigns can muster. The media and the scientific community will continue as crucial arenas in this process. The white paper's failures over transport and energy may create a more receptive era in which serious discussion of 'alternative scenarios' for industry, energy and transport will play a more conspicuous role in normal political discourse.

The international sphere will be the most powerful motor for change. Institutions such as the United Nations Environment Programme and a European Environmental Agency will grow in significance. International conferences such as that on global warming will increasingly impinge on national politics. The transformation of the traditional state to a green state will depend on this new social and international context as much as on the traditional political arena.●

Fred Steward is the director of the technology policy unit at Aston University.

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Keep It In The Family

For most people, inheritance has never meant very much. But the rise of home ownership and rapidly increasing house prices have changed all that. **Chris Hamnett** examines what it might mean

Wealth inheritance has long been of interest to novelists and economists alike. The woman who left an income of two or three thousand pounds a year and was pursued by cash hungry suitors was a staple of Victorian novels of the middle and upper classes. Inheritance figures prominently in Trollope's novels and in Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*. Remember Soames Forsyte in *A Man Of Property*? Wealth economists have been interested in inheritance for the reason that it is considered to be the key to the maintenance of wealth inequality. Most wealthy people had rich parents. The self-made are still a minority.

Until recently, the possibility of significant inheritance was not something that figured in most people's lives. The odd legacy apart, inheritance was confined to the middle and upper classes. But the last few years have seen a gradual reawakening of interest in inheritance, and in housing inheritance in particular. The reason is simple. The rapid expansion of home ownership postwar combined with rapid house price inflation during the last 20 years means that millions of people now own substantial assets. And many of these houses are eventually going to be inherited.

This is a radical change from the situation pre-war when most houses were still privately rented, and the major beneficiaries of housing inheritance were the sons and daughters of landlords. The scale of the transformation has been dramatic. In 1945 there were just 3m owner occupiers, 25% of all households. In 1989 there were 15m owner-occupiers, 66% of households. In the same period, the proportion of private renters fell from 66% to 10%. In just 45 years the housing tenure structure of Britain has been stood on its head. From being a nation of tenants, Britain is now two-thirds of the way to becoming a nation of home-owners.

The political implications of wider home ownership have not gone unnoticed. In 1979, shortly after taking office, Margaret Thatcher declared that the Conservative policy of selling council houses 'will be a giant stride towards making a reality of Anthony Eden's dream of a property-owning democracy. It will do something else – it will give to most of our people the prospect of handing something on to their children and grandchildren which owner-occupation provides'. Ten years later, with 1.3m council houses sold under the right to buy legislation, and home ownership touching 66%, Eden's dream is now coming true.

Not surprisingly, ownership has often been seen on the Right and on the Left as an individualist tenure which undermines radicalism and promotes social stability and conservatism: 'A bulwark against Bolshevism and everything Bolshevism stands for', as one building society chairman put it in the 1920s. The electoral implications of home-ownership are still the subject of fierce academic debate but there is no doubt that it has offered many people a much greater degree of autonomy and control over their homes than they had as tenants. It has also opened the possibility of widespread wealth ownership and accumulation for the first time.

Leaving aside recent price falls, in the long term, average house prices have risen from £5,000 in 1970 to £55,000 in 1988 – an increase of exactly tenfold or 1,000%. These figures are national averages and they do not take inflation into account. Figure 1 shows that, when inflation is allowed for, national average house prices have risen nearly two and a half times in real terms since the mid-1950s.

Houses have functioned not just as a store of wealth, they have also been a source of substantial capital gains for many owners. Leaving aside complexities about rates of return, someone who bought a £5,000 house in 1970 on a 20-year mortgage could now, other things being equal, be living in a house with a capital value of £55,000 and no mortgage. More recent buyers will have made smaller gains, but their houses will generally be worth much more than they paid.

This is the heart of the difference between owners and tenants. Whereas owners are able to purchase an appreciating asset with a depreciating debt (inflation whittles away the real value of the mortgage), tenants generally have to pay rents which increase at or above the rate of inflation. At the end of the day, they have no capital asset to show for their rent payments. As a result there is a growing wealth gap between owners and tenants.

The result of rising levels of home-ownership and rising house prices has been that housing's share of net personal wealth (that is privately-owned property and assets) in Britain has risen from just 17% in 1960 to 48% in 1987. In other words, housing now accounts for half of personal wealth in Britain, and a large number of home-owners have a substantial capital asset.

The expansion of this group has been of significance for the distribution of wealth in Britain. In 1960 the top 10% of wealth holders owned 71% of personal wealth. By 1985 the figure had fallen to 52%. And the share of wealth owned by the top 25% fell from 86% to 76% over the same period. Much of this decrease is attributable to the growth of housing wealth, but how much is difficult to say.

But the share of the top 50% of wealth owners changed very little. They owned 97% of personal wealth in 1971 and 93% in 1985. The redistribution of wealth has only taken place *within* the top 50% of wealth owners. The bottom 50% who owned only 7% of all wealth in 1985 have barely improved their position. Though home-ownership has widened wealth distribution within the top 50% of wealth owners, it has not reduced the inequalities between owners and tenants.

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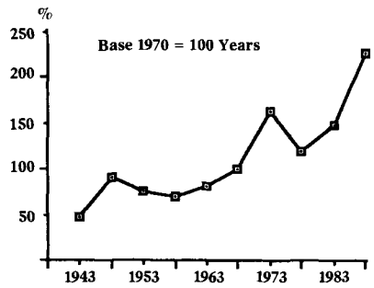
Figure 1

National Average House Prices In Real Terms



Source: Adapted from *House Prices*, Government Service Working Paper, HMSO, 1990.

Figure 3

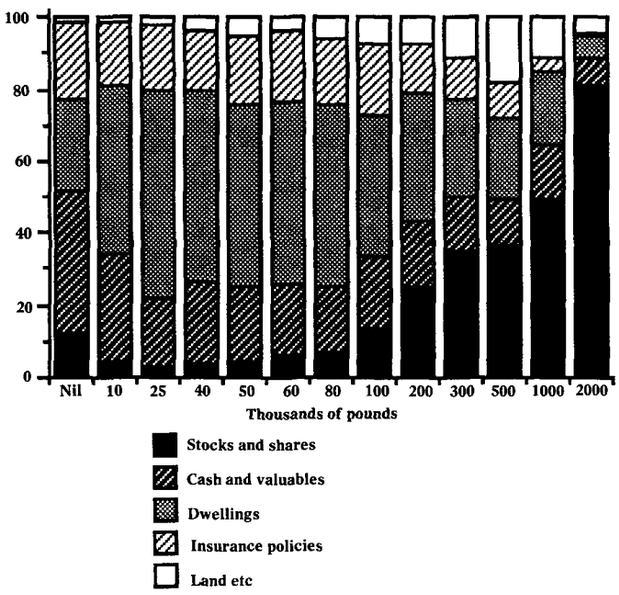
The Distribution of Wealth in Britain: Share Of Total Wealth (%)

	1923	1938	1971	1980	1985
Top 1%	61	55	31	20	20
Top 10%	89	85	65	52	54
Top 20%	94	91	–	–	–
Top 25%	–	–	86	75	76
Top 50%	–	–	97	94	93

Source: CSO, *Social Trends* 1988

Figure 2

Identified Personal Wealth of Individuals, 1987



Source: *Inland Revenue Statistics*, HMSO, 1988

These changes in wealth inequality do not entail a reduction in the concentration of control or ownership of means of production. Housing wealth is not productive wealth and it does not make home-owners into mini-capitalists, however large the capital gains they may make and however much they may trade up-market.

What happens to this accumulated housing wealth? Some of it is released when owners take out a bigger mortgage than necessary to finance a move or home improvements and use the surplus for other purposes. It is also possible to use housing equity as a security for borrowing – the so-called equity release schemes. The growth of what is termed 'premature equity extraction' by these means has led many economists to argue that housing wealth underpinned the late-1980s consumer boom and the rise in consumer credit.

For most people, however, the gains re-main paper ones until they retire and move down-market to a cheaper house or until they die and leave their houses to their beneficiaries. It is estimated that about 40% of housing equity is released via inheritance, but its potential importance only became apparent in the 1980s. In 1988 *The Economist* argued that, as a result of a combination of lower tax rates and housing inheritance, 'Britain's middle classes, so long demoralised and impoverished (sic) are about to grow rich once more...the bequest, that staple of Victorian melodrama, is about to make a dramatic comeback'. *The Economist* was joined a year later by Nigel Lawson, then chancellor of the exchequer, who suggested in a Mansion House speech that: 'Britain is about to become a nation of inheritors. Inheritance, which used to be the preserve of the few, will become a fact of life for the many. People will be inheriting houses, and possibly also stocks and shares. All this is highly desirable for it leads not only to the further diffusion of property in society, but to a more stable and responsible society.'

'Rapid expansion of home ownership postwar means that millions of people now own substantial assets'

A nation of inheritors is a splendid post-prandial phrase, but is it valid? Are we really entering a world where, in Professor Peter Saunders's words, 'millions of working people stand at some stage in their lives to inherit capital sums far in excess of anything which they could save through earnings from employment'? And if it is true, what are the economic and social implications?

To answer these questions we need some figures on the scale and incidence of housing inheritance. Inland Revenue figures show that of a total of 271,000 'estates passing at death' (the property left by the deceased) in 1968-9, a total of 125,000 (46%) included house property. By 1984-5 the number was 148,000; an increase of only 19% in 15 years. On the basis of these figures, the projected explosion of housing inheritance has not yet happened. We are some way from becoming a 'nation of inheritors' even though 148,000 estates including house property means (with an average of three beneficiaries per property) about 450,000 individual beneficiaries every year.

The reason is very simple: the post-war growth of home-ownership has not yet percolated through into inheritance. Most of the postwar generation of new home-owners are still alive. But they will eventually die, and projections suggest that the number of estates passing at death, and hence the number of potential beneficiaries, are likely to double over the next 30-40 years. We may therefore be slowly moving towards a nation of inheritors, but not for many years to come.

What has increased dramatically is the value of inherited house property. In 1969 it totalled £465m. By 1985-6, largely as a result of house price inflation, it totalled £4.6 billion – ten times as much – and today it will be around £7.5 billion. The average value of house property left in estates today is about £50,000, and as each estate has an average of three main beneficiaries, the average sum inherited from housing is about £17,000, roughly 1.3 times the average male income.

These are large sums, and housing inheritance is clearly not to be sneezed at. But, on the other hand, £17,000 is not going to make a massive difference to most people's lives. Some people, of course, will inherit far more – tens if not hundreds of thousands of pounds. But many will inherit less than the average, just a few thousand pounds. For them, inheritance will not be very significant – a new car perhaps, or a bit

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Radical PHILOSOPHY 56

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more in the building society.

So who inherits and how is inheritance distributed socially? Is it the case, as some have suggested, that inheritance will be widely distributed? To shed some light on this we carried out a national survey of 3,300 households. We found that some 300 households included people who had inherited houses or a share of proceeds. But among them housing inheritance was unevenly distributed. Most people who inherit (from their parents in the majority of cases) are in their 40s or 50s when they inherit. Very few beneficiaries are in their 20s or 30s unless they have a childless aunt or uncle or a doting grandparent.

But the key issue is not *when* people inherit but *whether* they inherit. The great majority of housing inheritances are received by existing home-owners, indeed home-owners are six times more likely to inherit than council tenants. The incidence of housing inheritance is also biased by class – managers and professionals are four times more likely to inherit than unskilled workers. Finally, the chance of inheritance varies by region. At the extremes, people living in the south east are four times more likely to inherit houses than people in Scotland. To put it another way, middle-class home-owners living in the south east are far more likely to inherit than working-class council tenants in Scotland or the north of England.

Why is housing inheritance so unequally distributed? One thing is clear. It is not a result of the class, tenure or location of the beneficiaries themselves. A council tenant who bought a house would not improve their chance of inheriting, nor would a move from Scotland to the south east, nor would promotion into management. The key to understanding the distribution of housing inheritance lies in the generational nature of the phenomenon. Most people who inherit houses do so from their parents or other relatives. It follows that the main determinant of whether people are likely to inherit is whether their parents or other relatives are home-owners. If they are the chance of inheriting is high. If not, a pools win is about the only hope.

But if parental home-ownership is the key, why is inheritance so concentrated among middle-class home-owners in the south east? Again we need to look back in time. The generation of home-owners now dying off and leaving their property would have bought in the 1950s when home-ownership was a much more middle-class phenomenon than today (though it is still quite strongly class related). Home-ownership has also always been higher in the south east than in other regions. But, given the much broader social distribution of home-ownership today, housing inheritance is likely to be more widely distributed in 30 years time than now.

But there is one group which is unlikely ever to inherit and that is the children of today's tenants. There are also major inequalities in the amount inherited. The children of middle-class parents living in the south east will inherit more than the children of working-class parents in a £40,000 terrace in the north of England. In the nation of inheritors, inheritance will not be equally distributed.

This brings us to the question of how housing inheritances are used. Do beneficiaries live in the houses they inherit, or do they sell them and use the proceeds to buy a house, improve their own house or buy consumer goods? Or do they just invest the proceeds? A key factor is whether people are sole or joint beneficiaries. Sole inheritors are more likely to retain inherited property, often because they lived in the house anyway – with elderly parents or others.

But most properties are sold, partly to divide up the proceeds among the beneficiaries. And because most beneficiaries are often middle-aged and well-established in their own homes, they usually invest the proceeds, often in a building society. Very few use the money to enter the housing market, although some mention helping their children to buy. The immediate consumption effects of housing inheritance are much more limited than commonly supposed. Saving rather than spending is the most common pattern. Most money goes back into the financial institutions who then lend it to other buyers.

Britain then, is not yet a 'nation of inheritors' or an 'inheritance economy'. And even if the number of houses inherited doubles in the next 30-40 years, housing inheritance is unlikely to have massive effects, though perhaps 70% of individuals may eventually stand to inherit something during their lives.

But several factors stand in the way of a nation of inheritors. First, the last few years has seen the rapid growth of private residential care for the elderly. Although a large slice of the £200-plus per week costs are funded by the Department of Health, many elderly home-owners have to sell their homes to meet the costs. This could rise in the future if the government tries to ensure that more of the costs are met by residents themselves.

Second, a growing number of financial institutions are offering elderly home-owners the chance to swap all or part of the value of their homes in exchange for income to supplement their pensions. This is one solution to the problems of 'housing rich, income poor' elderly owners. If the take up of these schemes grows, the amount of housing equity extracted in life will increase, and the share available for inheritance will decrease.

Third, until the recent housing market slump, a growing number of elderly home-owners were selling up and buying a place in one of the private sheltered housing developments – 10 000 such units were built in 1989. As many of these units are small and expensive, it is questionable whether the buyers (or their beneficiaries) will be able to re-sell them for what they paid. If not, the sum available for housing inheritance will inevitably be reduced.

'Houses have functioned as a substantial source of capital gains'

Fourth, there is a question mark hanging over private health provision and the NHS. If NHS provision declines, and government tries to encourage more old people to use their housing equity to buy private health care (as Edwina Currie has suggested), this could further reduce the housing equity held by elderly owners.

The final wild card is inheritance taxation. For 80 years, from Lloyd George's 'people's budget' of 1909 until 1980, taxation of estates at death steadily increased and was very progressive – the more you left the greater the Inland Revenue's slice. Death duties were used as a part of a redistributive social policy. But, in a series of major changes, the Conservatives have raised minimum thresholds and completely abolished progressive inheritance tax, which they view as both punitive and unfair. There is now no tax on estates below £128,000, and a 40% flat rate over that.

What this means in practice is that most dying owners can leave their wealth intact. Only about 15% of estates are taxed. This is clearly a part of Conservative policy to encourage wealth accumulation and transmission within families, and to reduce the degree of 'dependence' on the state. The minimum limit is pitched to exclude most house property from tax. But will it continue to be as generous in the future? In the final analysis the value of inheritance is dependant on what tax cut the government takes. If the pressure for tax revenue increases, tax rates could be increased. If so, the value of housing inheritance will be reduced.

What policy should a Labour government pursue on the question of inheritance taxation? Here as elsewhere, Conservative tax cuts have created a new set of expectations, and they may be difficult to reverse without electoral unpopularity. Reducing the minimum exemption limit may be difficult, even if it were desirable, but it could be allowed to decline in real terms by not raising the limit every year as the Conservatives have done. Reintroduction of progressive inheritance taxation on estates over £128,000 should not be too difficult, however, and it would affect less than 15% of estates. Though, of course, if tax rates were set too high, they could spell the return of the tax exile and lead to widespread avoidance. Meanwhile, the revenue raised from inheritance taxation could be used for greater expenditure on health and residential care for the elderly.●

***Safe As Houses. Housing Inheritance In Britain*, by Chris Hamnett, Mike Harmer and Peter Williams, to be published by Paul Chapman in November 1990.**

Chris Hamnett is a senior lecturer in geography at the Open University.

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Animal Magic

Millions of viewers are tuning in to David Attenborough's *Trials Of life*. **Fred Steward** considers how the wildlife series has responded to the green movement

The exquisite detail of an ejaculating giant clam accompanied by the hushed tones of David Attenborough marked an appropriate start to his third nature superseries *Trials Of Life*. Through the tv screen's window on the natural world the combination of superb film technique with a human interest storyline has proved to be a winning formula.

Since the astonishing success of *Life On Earth* in 1979, nature programmes consistently pull in top viewing ratings. Regular series such as *Survival*, and specials such as *Flight Of The Condor* and *Kingdom Of The Ice Bear* bring ravishingly beautiful images of nature into our living rooms.

The tv trilogy of Attenborough's view of nature and the mushrooming of the modern natural history programme has spanned more than a decade. The same period has seen the emergence of the green movement with its own distinctive view of nature. This too has been reflected in television. Environmental programmes have been a distinct area focused on the critical exposure of damage to the natural world.

From investigative journalism to philosophical discussion, green television has expanded separately over the same period. What is the relationship between these genres? Do they complement or conflict with each other? The wildlife programme may have have contributed to the new popular status of nature or possibly attenuated the awfulness of environmental destruction through its glossy images. The green programme may have stimulated interest in the beauties of nature or perhaps fostered obsessions with ugly images of technological and industrial development.

Attenborough's style of natural history tv is firmly rooted in the consensual scientific style. A shared pleasure in the beauties of nature is combined with authoritative, uncontroversial commentary. In itself it represented a major step from the early human-centred animal programmes in which interaction between the tv presenter and the animal world was the focus. Attenborough's early *Zoo Quest* series, Armand and Michaela Dennis' *On Safari*, and Hans and Lotte Hass' *Diving To Adventure* all relied heavily on the 'thrill of the chase'. A visible human mediator was seen as a necessary stimulus to the viewers engagement with nature.

Life On Earth changed this emphasis. While retaining a knowledgeable and enthusiastic individual as commentator and guide, the viewer was now enticed into a secret world of nature untouched by human hand. It combined the broad scientific canvas of evolutionary theory with the stunning detail delivered by a new generation of technically expert camera crews.

The strengths of the Attenborough genre are the apparent directness of the relationship of the viewer to unspoiled nature, the unashamed evocation of an aesthetic and emotional appeal, the universality of the grand narrative of nature. There can be little doubt that it has played a key role in the heightening of public consciousness about the importance and beauty of the natural world. Without such a popular vision it is doubtful that the negative scenarios of the green movement would have had such impact.

Although the camera crews have displayed the customary competitive machismo to boldly go where none have gone before, there can be no question of their passion and respect for the natural world. Their unrivalled knowledge of vital habitats has been a major source of information about new threats to their survival and has contributed to the growing political concern worldwide.

Ironically the supernaturalism of the modern wildlife film relies on a battery of artificial devices, high-speed cameras and time-lapse photography, radio-controlled airborne filming and laboratory simulation. David Attenborough has been the first to acknowledge that it is a very 'unnatural history'. While modern film-makers have rejected the grosser abuses such as the notorious case of lemmings being driven over a cliff edge to fit the script required, the closeness to nature of the current art rests on an elaborate, if principled, human intervention.

While this seems to be a legitimate part of the film-makers craft there have been a number of criticisms levelled at the genre. These all reflect, to differing degrees, the new awareness of nature arising from the growth of green politics. At one rather abstract extreme is the view that the very forms of representation themselves in their manipulation of time and their search for a pleasing aesthetic impose a scientised model of the world.

More concretely there is a concern that the picture presented in the natural history programme bears no relation to a normal individual's likely experience of nature. At best this could lead to disappointment and unfulfilled expectation. At worst, concern over the threats to nature could be ameliorated by the comfort induced by a cosy picture-book world. This seems an irresolvable dilemma. On balance it is surely better to evoke pleasure and excitement over the beauty of the natural world than to confine oneself to an overearnest realism. Without such passions it is difficult to believe anyone could be stirred into the type of action needed to avert its destruction.

A more substantive criticism concerns the 'human interest' storyline deemed necessary for high audience ratings. Sex and violence are two of these which have both revealed classic moments from nature. Who could forget the endearing scenes of giant tortoises struggling to copulate or the beauty and savagery of the tiger's kill. But they have also tended to become routinised cliches in the nature programmes's repertoire. It is in this regard that the new Attenborough series is most disappointing.

In the two previous series there was a counterpoint between anthropomorphic titillation and the grand scientific themes. In *Trials Of Life*, the analogies with human behaviour have become the central theme around which everything is orchestrated.

Another criticism levelled at the nature programme is that it refuses to overtly acknowledge the environmental threats to the wonders that it portrays. This also poses a dilemma. To entice the viewers into an intimate vision of the beauties of nature and then to confront them with the full horror of their destruction is not necessarily courageous, it may even be foolhardy. An overzealous stance may repel the sensitive watcher as much as attract them. Maybe people are capable of working the connection out for themselves.

The film-makers have adopted different paths. Some have increasingly referred to the pressures on the habitat portrayed. For films on the rainforests it is almost embarrassing not to. Others

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Attenborough under attack from thousands of Christmas Island crabs

have seen such references as more appropriate to the explicitly environmental rather than natural history programme irrespective of their own views on the subject.

The 'environmental' or 'green' programme has had to deal with the opposite problem. It has developed as a distinct genre in which doom and gloom initially tended to dominate. The exposure of the negative threat has remained the driving force. Initially the heavy hand of the exhaustive *End Of The Planet* survey tended to predominate. With the growth of popular audiences more subtlety has been developed to cater for wider tastes than the hard core of converted.

Echoing the wider political context, the 1980s saw the movement of the green programme from the margins to the mainstream. Instead of remaining confined to a specialist slot its concerns entered other strands of programming. Investigative programmes such as *World In Action* looked at radiation hazards and the political heavy weights like *Panorama* tackled energy issues.

The technology fetishism in *Tomorrows World* began to make space for reports on global warming. '*Nature*' introduced the specialist news/comment format to the environmental area fronted by mainstream presenter Michael Buerk. Programmes in lifestyle and leisure slots also began to absorb green themes on topics from cooking to gardening.

This transition has widened audiences from a small band of visionaries and depressives to a wider group of concerned viewers. Yet they have rarely approached anything like the audiences of the natural history programme. This might explain their livelier evolution and more creative adaptation to the new green environment than has actually been shown by the wildlife spectacular.

There are two characteristics of the green genre which differ markedly from the traditional natural history format. These challenge in particular the role of science exemplified by Attenborough. Commitment has replaced detachment, contestation supplants authority. These new principles have yet to fully permeate the barrier between the two tv compartments. Botanic Man Bellamy represents some of the features of the potential transition. He has developed a different style in which environmental commitment is proudly prominent. Yet the basic structure of the nature programme remains relatively undisturbed.

If there is one feature that has changed it has been the explicit reintroduction of the human mediator. *Reefwatch* and *Badgerwatch* have revived the human patrol communicating with base camp format introduced between Heinz Sielman and Peter Scott in their woodpecker watch of 1955. Attenborough's new series often casts him in active relationship to the animals themselves.

Ironically *Trials Of Life* reveals an aspect of the format which unintentionally echoes a fundamental green theme of the finiteness of nature. *Life On Earth* brought a dazzling array of new images to the screen based on the myriad technical advances of the 1970s. Its message was of infinite diversity and variety. In 1990 the images of shiny treefrogs, of sharp-toothed bats appear more familiar. The overriding impression is of limits: both to this tradition of filmmaking and to nature itself.●

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Ken Worpole discovers new rage jazz

Boiling Billy

Billy Jenkins prefers to call his kind of jazz, 'New Rage'. The caterwauling, frenzied and often surprisingly lyrical music he and The Voice Of God Collective creates is a parodic – verging on the outright aggressive – response to blandness or over-intellectualism in jazz.

Although 1991 will see the 10th anniversary of the band's formation, it is only in the last couple of years that Jenkins and his changing ensemble have been recognised as one of the most important and original voices in the new wave of British and European jazz.

Two new LPs – *Jazz Cafe Concerts Vol 1&2* – give some impression of the enthusiasm and excitement which the band generates live. Jenkins, playing electric guitar, leads the band in the style of a speeded up Tommy Cooper. A Jenkins set is marked by a series of apparent false starts, missed cues, incomprehensible musical allusions and physical mayhem.

In performance glove puppets get thrown across the stage, soloists upbraided or further encouraged with shouts and grins, sheet music goes flying, spectacles and instruments get mislaid, and throwaway remarks are hurled at the audience. Sometimes the band seems to be playing different numbers. The whole act is a mixture of burlesque pit orchestra, avant-garde rock group and free-form jazz ensemble. Yet it is impossible not to be mesmerised by the sheer audacity and passion of the music actually played.

There is a serious side to this apparently chaotic melange. For Jenkins' music – carefully written and orchestrated in advance – engages consistently with the forms, melodic traditions and instrumentation of 'the popular' in ways which Mike Westbrook, particularly, opened up within the jazz tradition in Britain. Since then the Grand Union Orchestra, Happy End and the Big Red Band have carried the torch.

This engagement with popular idioms is not surprising given Billy Jenkins' background: little formal musical education, playing in a pub band at 14 doing cover numbers of Slade songs, supporting Billy Idol, touring with Ginger Baker, founder (and only?) member of Rock Against Rock, session musician on *Jim'll Fix It*, dance band stand-in and latterly prolific composer of serious jazz albums.

He is currently working on a series of compositions which attempt to respond to the traumatic transport disasters of 1987/1988 – Lockerbie, Kings Cross, Zeebrugge – using a new instrumentation for him: cello and two 'crap' pianos. What he wishes to evoke, he says, is both the haunting melodic seriousness of the cello with the lost illusions or broken dreams represented by a pair of slightly out of tune lounge bar pianos.

He will not hear a word said against the sentimental power of the popular tea dance orchestra, bandbox or sing-a-long tradition. A serious composer needs all the available material to hand. A particular sensibility is involved here, that combines high seriousness with a sense of the absurd and banal. Music for transitional times?

Yet there is an even more powerful reason for celebrating the Collective's success in making the improvisational and free-form popular beyond the conventional jazz coterie. This has to do with one of the great unresolved dilemmas of radical aesthetics arising from the long-standing break between a modernising and liberating politics and a modernist avant-garde cultural tradition.

For a brief while – particularly with Russian constructivism – revolutionary politics was synonymous with revolutionary aesthetics. Stalinism killed that stone dead. In its wake, naturalism, socialist realism and agit-prop have often in their turn produced a dour, reductionist and text-bound attitude to art and life rather than one of energy, vigour, eclecticism and occasional joy. Hence the disastrous separation between radical culture and popular culture, the one overly serious and programmatic, the other at times deriving most of its impetus and energy from interest rates and capital returns.

Billy Jenkins: Moving jazz in new directions

Re-connecting the radical and the popular remains a key cultural project. The current jazz revival offers real hope in that direction.

Jenkins' music recalls a particular attempt to link jazz with radical or popular musical traditions that has rarely been explored in contemporary jazz exegesis. In the early 1960s, Günther Schuller, composer, critic but also member of the Gil Evans big band on the seminal Miles Davies albums, *Porgy & Bess* and *Sketches Of Spain* argued for a 'Third Stream' in jazz, combining the instrumentation and improvisational elements of jazz with more orchestral and compositional elements of the classical and modernist repertoire.

At the time he was referring to jazz composers such as John Lewis of the Modern Jazz Quartet, George Russel and Don Ellis among others. A side-current of jazz, attempting to borrow from European, Latin Dance, folk songs, political programmes, has continued since then, particularly in the work of Carla Bley, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra and Mike Westbrook's Brass Band, among others.

Jenkins is also radical in that he eschews the support of the conventional recording, marketing and distribution arms of the big companies. A prolific composer and recording musician, he has produced 10 LPs or cassettes in the last eight years, all on his own label, the flamboyant *Voice Of The People* records. He is currently planning the next 12 LPs. Sameness has nothing to do with it. Every album so far tries something different and all have a fizzing and dazzling quality of their own. Jenkins and his spirited band have in a relatively short space of time blown open doors in all directions – live performance, low-budget, high-quality recording, self-distribution and an articulated commitment to 'music not money'.

Traditionally, jazz guitarists have spent most of their time in the rhythm section 'cooking': keeping the rhythm, flavouring the melody with arpeggios, accidentals and grace notes, holding the lid down. Billy Jenkins boils.●

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Matt ffytche talks to Jana Štroblová

Velvet Underground

November 17 marks the first anniversary of the 'velvet revolution' in Czechoslovakia. Jana Štroblová, a Czech poet who lost her status after the Warsaw pact intervention of 1968, is now able to publish her work again after 20 years. On her first visit to Britain she spoke to Matt ffytche about her life during the last two decades, and her feelings about the revolution in 1989.

Protest and publish: Knee-high view of a democratic revolution

Your work is being published in an anthology called *Child Of Europe*. Is that how you think of yourself?

I think the child might be a result of love, but the title makes me think about a lost child without a home because we people from so-called 'Eastern Europe' lost our home. I say so-called, because we are middle Europe. The East brought us oppression and dictatorship.

Josef Svorecky wrote of the revolution in 1989 that people in their twenties felt pure joy, for those in their forties it was mixed with sadness, and those of 60 or over felt only bitterness. Do you feel joy or bitterness?

I think this opening of hope is only for our children, not for us. I am very happy, I never dreamt there would be such an affectionate or soft revolution. But the full hope of the future will come only in the next generation. We lost 20 years that nobody can give back.

Your early poetry showed a fascination for natural beauty – is that attitude lost to you as well?

We've lost the beauty of nature. I was already afraid in the 60s when the first trees were cut, and heavy technology began to destroy the countryside. After the occupation of the Soviet troops, the landscape was destroyed. There is no good drinking water in Czechoslovakia now.

One of my poems, *The Slaughterhouse*, is an image of our world destroyed by the occupation. I wrote it originally as a general protest against violence. However it happened to be published after a violent police action against an anti-communist demonstration, so everybody thought it was about that, when I wanted it to be more allegorical.

I confessed at the time that it was written as part of a useless struggle to re-establish laws protecting animals. I hardly dared to confess that what we all felt at that time was the lack of laws protecting people. I soon realised that the laws protecting animals didn't conflict with laws protecting people. My favourite biblical allegory is Noah's ark – he didn't only save his own life, but all living things. I think if we allow violence against one defenceless human being, we open the door to violence threatening the whole world.

In a lot of your poems, and much east European writing, there is this tension of not being allowed to say what you see. Was that one of the hardest things as a writer in the 70s?

It wasn't so hard because I wrote for myself and my friends, in spite of not being able to publish. Of course, it was sad without a public, but not tragic.

Even so – a lot of the writing seems to be ironic, contrasting 'now' and 'then', reality and fantasy. Is the element of fantasy predominantly a comment on the lack of freedom, or was there still room for play?

There must be a balance between seriousness and play. I think it is necessary that we aren't only sentimental or only sensible. We must be able to laugh at ourselves as well.

How did you manage to live after 1968? You lost your job and you had a child to look after.

Even my husband lost his job. Several years were very difficult. But I studied natural sciences and wrote a textbook for children. I also managed to do translations, initially under a pseudonym – even though it was from Russian poetry, Akhmatova, and Tsvetayeva.

Did you feel kinship with them?

Marina Tsvetayeva is closer to me because she lived in Prague for four years during her emigration. She really lost her country, but we lost it too, we were in inner exile.

Most of the Czech writers known in the West are men – Havel, Kundera, Klima. Was it

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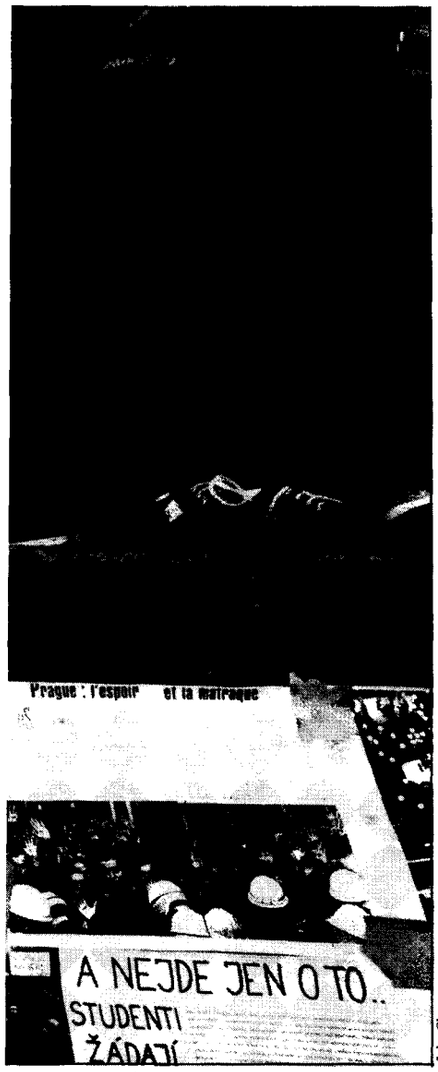

John Chapman

difficult being published as a woman?
I think they were in another situation because they wrote as dissidents and openly opposed the government.

There's a difference between an open fight and inner exile. I was not so courageous. I never collaborated, but I was afraid to publish my poems abroad and face persecution. They published abroad – maybe they felt it was better than not publishing at all.

Did you ever feel things were so bad that you didn't want to carry on?
When I felt that the bad times were going to last forever, that there was no hope of an end in the near future, that was the worst moment.

Where were you last November, what did you feel?
I was in Prague. Fourteen days before I had returned from Armenia – my first journey for 20 years. In spite of my translating Russian poets, I was not allowed to travel there. Last year was a little better for us even before the revolution. Armenia is a very desperate country; poverty and hunger are everywhere. When I returned to Czechoslovakia I wanted to kiss my native earth for the first time, it had been such a contrast.

I didn't know there would be a revolution in 14 days, but I felt something in my bones. I thought now was the last chance to tear away from the Soviet Union. The students prepared a big demonstration, and I predicted that on that day of commemoration for a student killed during the German occupation, they would fill the streets.

All those young people went to the streets, in spite of their feelings of hopelessness. I went out with them but it was a very cold day and I returned home. Nobody expected any violence. I waited for my son without fear and he didn't return. And then I heard from Radio Free Europe what was happening in the streets and I was worried about him. He was injured, like many of the students. Some are affected for life.

Do you think it was a very spiritual revolution – the writing on the wall, the symbol of Havel?
When Havel first spoke to the crowd in Wenceslas Square on the second day of the revolution, I can't describe how exciting it was. People sang our national hymn, and everyone cried in both senses of the word – they shouted and they burst into tears.

Will that belief carry through in terms of government?
I think it must last. Economic life will be very hard. Some people will lose their bread, or their jobs. But think of the last 40 years...

Are you still writing?
I was not able to write as I lived through the changes. I took part in meetings instead of poems, I worked for papers and magazines.

There's been a big boom in journalism.
We are reading only papers now, there's no time for books, but it is very difficult to read all the papers edited in Czechoslovakia at the moment. They are all very open, but some of their illusions about democracy are funny. They want to be against everyone, they criticise Havel because he stutters, or because he has a car.

Lots of things are coming in from the West now. Is that changing people?
I hope that we change each other. The problems of the West are different. Your style of life is comfortable, and it is a natural thing in the West for people to have what they want.

But, of course, that can also mean having things like drugs and pornography...
I am afraid that some people from the East already want to take these things from the West. I had an interesting meeting in Barcelona in June when I visited a feminist book festival. I was asked whether the feminist movement is as strong as in the West, and I answered that I didn't feel the necessity of the feminist movement because for us it was usual to fight against oppression together.

Prague is one of the most unspoilt capitals in Europe, will it be possible to preserve it against the assaults of modernity and tourism?
My first journey after the revolution was to New York. That was a dream for me. I saw churches there overbuilt by skyscrapers. Up till that day I imagined a church must be the highest building in the town, now I was seeing a church from the top of the world. It was a very strange feeling. It seemed to me such an attitude gave people much more opportunity to choose their own faith, a faith of the self rather than just the faith of old books and institutions.●

The Slaughterhouse

Certainly somewhere there's paradise
where the lamb sleeps curled up with the wolves and a man
buries his face in the lion's mane
but we are so far removed
that the butchers jauntily lash
the calf they're taking for execution
and skin the seals alive

Hold my hand while I tell you this
Pain hurts me I always shut my eyes
when in the cinema something bad
was happening

We shut our eyes
they open the slaughterhouse

Those who don't mind blood

And they trample a daisy a tree
kick a dog
and people
those they can kick
in the groin
The weak

The knife-edge of their denseness detonator of small-mindedness
and there is war
started by a bowstring tremor of the veins
by bad children playing the game of blood-flesh-bone

Don't shut your eyes

Hold my hand in this world

Reprinted from *Child Of Europe* (Penguin, £6.99)

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Sue Vice comes out of the closet

The Outsider

When I accepted a job at a university, I found myself among one of the disturbingly few women working in higher education. Friends told me it would be my chance to wear two-piece denim suits and bicycle clips. What they didn't say was that my lack of a beard, and apparent disinclination ever to produce one, my height (or lack of it), absence of an authoritative voice, failure to wear any recognisable lady-academic garments (a nice kilt, perhaps, or something floral), would position me outside of all categories.

Theoretically, I'm a teacher, but I look more like a student. One colleague asked if I was a third-year within days of my arrival, as I clearly looked dazed but not fresh-faced enough to be a first-year.

I heard a real third-year confide in her friend, after glancing at me, that there were many exchange students about, who she didn't recognise. I may look like one of the people, and feel oddly closer to them than to my own colleagues, but I'm not really acceptable as one.

My remarks in tutorials about Public Enemy or Dennis Hopper start off spontaneous and end up silly. I sit there in Doc Martens, aware that the real people are wearing red Pumas. Some paternal figure kindly advised me not to say 'fuck' in tutorials because 'the creatures' would hate me thereafter. Having assiduously avoided The Word for weeks, we read *Cloud Nine* and all caution is flung to the winds.

They produce not only the forbidden verb every other sentence, but countless exotic synonyms, they chatter unselfconsciously about it, they laugh in a sophisticated and urbane way. I laugh too, of course, but out of hysteria. I suspect they know more than I do, and are certainly freer to say it.

I may be a lecturer yet not a lecturer to the students. To the bearded ones I'm a colleague yet mysteriously also not a colleague. Invigilating for an exam, the chief examiner eyes me curiously – has an Indian crept over the boundary of the desks and installed herself with the chiefs? He doesn't include me in his whispered conversations about buying Bordeaux and the question on Restoration comedy. Eventually he hisses uncertainly, 'The last ten minutes are the worst, aren't they?' I see the word 'dear' forming on his lips and bitten back at the last second.

Youth is one thing, but femininity is another. I become a parody of myself – I ventriloquise a vigilant feminist voice, pointing out that after the age of menstruation, females are women, not girls. I produce course documents in which feminist theory features prominently. Women poets are asked to read at the department, and, according to a genital law, I invite them and I have them to stay in my house.

The beards look at me warily, as if they're being policed by a spirit of radical feminism – I may at any minute point out their ideologically contradictory position, or shout 'clitoris' at the top of my voice. We're all gendered subjects, but some more so than others. I find myself resisting this feminist label, I both want and do not want to teach feminist theory. I consider proposing a course on The Macho in 20th-century literature, but rushing to the other extreme, of course, fails entirely to explode the opposition. I lose either way.

As this very gendered subject, the conclusion is silently but clearly reached that I am a lesbian, that quintessence of both fringe political positions, vegetarianism largely, and feminism. Beards clearly feel it would be narrow-minded of them *not* to assume I'm a lesbian. I'm also useful as a sign of diversity, a way for them to try out liberal attitudes: 'When you suggested this exam question on the Victorian novel, they ask, you did of course mean to refer to sex and marriage didn't you, not just marriage?'

I'm also of use when liberal attitudes have to be put into practice. A colleague rings me up to discuss a course on feminist literary theory for next year, *The Lesbian Body* is down there, and *Surpassing The Love Of Men*. He suggests, as I'm ringing about some other books, I might ask the university bookshop if these lesbian tracts are in print. I agree. Only later does it occur to me he was probably too embarrassed to do it himself and thought it more suitable for me to inquire after such works, even though he was certainly less compromisable than me.

Things reach the stage where any mention of homosexuality causes me to blush guiltily, imagining I'm being referred to – thus proving the point. Students of both sexes call in to ask me about the lesbian continuum and Adrienne Rich. Someone pops their head round the door and tells me, aghast, Sinead O'Connor is married! I'm horrified too, but watch myself being so. I fail to make my position, which is unsoundly unpolymorphous, clear, and start to feel I've tricked them.

I suppress reality. Would they still speak to me if they suspected the horrible truth, which is that I'm a closet heterosexual? My status as an individual is taken over by a stereotype, and one which is oddly unstereotypical. Not only am I forced to be a feminist, which (of course) I already am, but, lacking visible nuclear attachments of the usual kind, I'm assumed to be homosexual. Not that it would be unpleasant to be one, it's just that a mistake about one's sexuality feels somehow particularly grievous.

After a meeting, a party of beards and I examine a course list of contemporary poets, three-quarters of which are men, and a colleague points out that this is a bit masculinist. I agree. Someone else observes that it's all right, after all, 'they're not *all* English'. The flexibility of patriarchy allows it to give a little, to enjoy a small joke at its own expense, interchange some oppressions so that it doesn't have to go all the way.

By some amazing feat of incorporation, however, patriarchy has anticipated critical manoeuvres and feminism almost becomes the stick with which to beat me. All exam papers on women's writing – never mind that the subjects are as diverse and specialised as detective fiction and race – must be marked by one of the few biologically suitable persons. Clearly the best way to incorporate restiveness is to make the natives responsible for their own grievances. Let's leave the girls' business to the girls.●

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The poetry and music of **Jayne Cortez**

All That Jazz

Jayne Cortez, jazz poet and campaigner for civil rights in the USA, talks to Chris Granlund about the way reading has influenced her life.

The first book I remember was *The Bible*. I used to go to two churches, one was Baptist and one was Catholic, so *The Bible* was always important. My mother read a lot, there were always books and magazines around. My major influence really came from music at an early age. It was more important than any poet or any poetry. There were a lot of records in the house, big band music, jazz and some blues. My mother used to sing to me rather than read to me.

I learned to read with the *Dick And Jane* books. That led me on to stories like *Cinderella* and *Jack And The Beanstalk*. But I was living in more of an oral situation, hearing stories about people coming from the country, of migrations, or tales about what their grandparents had told them. I would write them all down, stories from my family, extended family, other families. You could just sit and listen, or if you weren't supposed to be there, you would have your ear to the door and listen all the same.

I used to read the encyclopedia and the dictionary, I would take down the new words in my notebook. And there was a book on medicine, a family book where you could look up 'heart disease', or see what the word 'narcotic' meant. Those were the three key books at home, and then there were the black newspapers. You looked to the black newspapers for information about all kinds of events, what was happening in church, the gossip, everything. If there was a lynching in the South, the whole community would be waiting to see what would happen to this guy down in Mississippi, whether they would just let him go again. A single incident would be followed by the whole community.

I wrote poetry as a child but I didn't call it poetry at the time. I kept notes of whatever I thought, secret things about what I was going to do, and some drawings. And then later the little notebooks would have things about how I felt about music. I took them with me to the jam sessions and I'd write in them and I'd draw. I still do the same thing.

The first school that I went to was segregated. It was sort of an army post so there were black soldiers, white generals, and white lieutenants, so I knew segregation. I grew up knowing you don't go here, you don't go in that door, you do this and that. I grew up with this. When I went to junior high school, it was more integrated because kids from all of the different neighbourhoods had to go there. At that time I had a lot of confrontations with white children. Once a boy called me a nigger, and I jumped on him.

There were women in my community who inspired me. I tended to like the women who seemed faster, who seemed like they knew where they were going. People who were just more aggressive. You start learning that somewhere inside you. And you start saying to yourself, 'that's the way I want to be, I would like to say this, and do that'. My mother was always at school about some fight that I'd had.

One teacher used to take us out to look for the *National Geographic* magazine to write about or do research from. But the store was far away, and we had to catch a couple of street cars to get there. That was always a problem in that neighbourhood where there were no bookshops. Whenever I went to the library I would come back with bags of books. I remember one anthology of the works of black poets. I read it and loved it and then had to find other books by the same authors. One of my favourites was Jean Tumar's book *Cane*, a beautiful book of short stories and poetry.

By the time I went to Mississippi to work directly in the civil rights movement, I had that background of urban segregation. When I got down there I could see that this was apartheid. I knew that if the people had the vote or if they could set up freedom schools, then it would help them for the first time in their lives to say 'no' to the white man. That sort of involvement helped me. It helped me see what was important in my life and what was not so important.

I did my first big public solo performance in 1962. I was inspired by the civil rights movement by Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. I started to write more external pieces, and read more political kinds of books. That's when I started reading seriously. At that point I became involved in an acting workshop, I was separated from my husband after being married for seven years so now I could do the things that I wanted to do. I had always wanted to be an actress, so I found a small group and I went there.

The person in charge had us reading poetry and we would go to libraries and try to seek out new works. We read a lot of plays at the time. I didn't know that much about literature and I had no idea that I was going to end up being a poet. I had no idea. I really liked Langston Hughes out of all of the poets. He was such a hero in the community because he was speaking the language of the people. You related to what he was doing, what he was saying. Before I left Los Angeles, I read a book by Lorca, which I loved. It was a time for me of waking up to literature.

I moved to New York City in 1967. I decided to live there so that my son could be closer to his dad because at that point that was where he needed to be. New York was also a good place for me. For the first time, I met many writers and could go out in the evening and hear someone reading from their work. When I got to New York, I was able to get more of everything. I spent hours in the book-stores and then I started to find places to read my work. Eventually I was published there. It's been my base of operation for over 20 years.●

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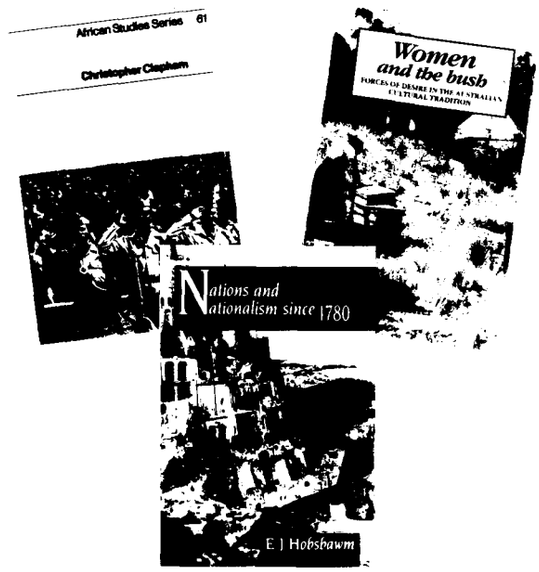
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Mary Kaldor reflects on the openings for Eastern Europe

The Hard Sell

Ralf Dahrendorf's book, **Reflections On The Revolution In Europe**, (*Chatto & Windus, pbk £5.99*), takes the form of a letter to a Polish friend who asked him a series of difficult questions about the future: the role of the market, the consequences of mass culture, the unification of Germany and so on. He seems to have asked all the right questions. The result is a very stimulating essay which throws up all sorts of interesting issues like the interpretation of communism as late-comer modernisation, the dismissal of national self-determination, Habermas' concept of 'constitutional patriotism' as opposed to 'Deutschmark nationalism', the deepening of the European Community, or the characterisation of the Helsinki process as a 'Brezhnevian monstrosity'.

The thrust of Dahrendorf's argument is that there is no 'third way'. What he means by this is that there are many ways. He is against 'systems', against the notion that there is a correct way of organising society, a technique that can solve social problems. The 'third way', he says, is 'another version of system thinking' and 'system thinking lies at the bottom of illiberality in all its varieties'. Instead, what is required is an open society which permits a multitude of ways. 'Europe will forever be a patchwork of languages and cultures, of everyday life, politics and economics. For the countries which have at last escaped the *nomenklatura*, socialism, the return to Europe means, therefore, like the open society, a chance to be themselves and not to conform to an imposed hegemonic model.'

If we accept this interpretation, Dahrendorf is absolutely right. There is no third way. But usually the phrase means something different. It means choosing the West. Because the second way, actually existing socialism, has collapsed, there is no alternative to the Western way. Dahrendorf is insistent that the east European countries do not have to choose liberal capitalism and his criticism of Hayek is very illuminating.

All the same, Dahrendorf does seem to mean that the east European countries have to choose the West, and by this he means not just an open society, but also materialism. He is, by his own admission, upset by his Polish friend's question about culture and whether the State ought to continue to subsidise films and books. Dahrendorf says that what people want is 'tabloids and hamburgers and shiny motorcycles and holidays in the Costa Brava', and he does not see how the less shallow values can be preserved. Indeed, he suggests that 'modernity, the market and glitter' are necessary to prevent fascism.

The question arises as to whether materialism is not in fact another 'system'? Are we not witnessing the Americanisation of Europe, the assimilation of cultures into a single homogeneous materialist culture, the transformation of citizens into consumers? Can the 'patchwork quilts of languages and cultures' be preserved against the onslaught of McDonald's, Pizza Hut and Sky Television? And do people really prefer hamburgers and dishwashers and motor cycles to clean air and water, living trees and animals? (The environment, such a central preoccupation of east Europeans, is not mentioned in the book.)

There is also another problem. Markets are both destructive as well as creative. The market could be a recipe not for materialism but for the 'Third Worldisation' of eastern Europe – unemployment, inflation, inequality and authoritarianism. That seems to me more likely than fascism. There is a real danger of a new economic division between West and East, akin perhaps to the division between North and South America.

I do not mean to suggest that east Europeans should be denied consumer goods nor that we should be against markets – markets are an important element of an open society. But I do want to suggest that both West and East have to change, that the West could indeed learn from an 'inter-cultural dialogue', that there are values and experiences which could contribute to an even greater diversity of 'ways'.

Dahrendorf, for some reason, is dismissive of the value of 'inter-cultural dialogue'. He also repeats the extraordinary charge that there were no new ideas in the revolutions of 1989, only old ideas copied from the West. This is, I believe, a deep cultural misunderstanding.

Dahrendorf applauds the new unification of language – the old 'newspeak' of socialist ideology is dead. But even though we speak the same language the words have quite different meanings because of different experiences and cultures. Words like Europe, socialism, privatisation, markets, feminism, have quite different significance in East and West. The east Europeans who made the 1989 revolution pioneered entirely new concepts but dressed them up in familiar phrases.

'Civil society' is such a phrase. Dahrendorf seems to think that the east Europeans meant what Burke and Maddison meant by the term. In fact, they developed a new concept which had to do with social and political change from below. The writing of Michnik, Havel or Konrad inspired not only the new movements which emerged in east-central Europe during the 1980s but also social movements in the West. Politics was no longer about capturing power but about changing the very nature of power relations.

One final point: Dahrendorf's book, in common with other accounts of the 1989 revolution, does not mention the peace movement. The peace movement in western Europe in the early 1980s was as large as the democracy movements in eastern Europe in the late 1980s. It had a profound influence on democratic culture, especially in Germany, and on ideas about Europe, disarmament and security. The strategy of 'detente from below' pursued by parts of the Western peace movement played a significant role in the events leading up to the revolutions of 1989. I may exaggerate its importance because I was involved. All the same, the way the role of the peace movement seems to be entirely written out of Western (although not Ea-

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hardcover June 1990 £35.00 0-333-53156-6

Against a prevailing attitude which rejects Marxism in toto, Professor Mouzelis puts forward a post-Marxist conceptual framework which overcomes economism while at the same time retaining some distinctive features of the Marxist paradigm — features which, when radically re-structured, are indispensable for macrohistorical comparisons and, more generally, for an examination of how social orders are constituted, maintained and transformed. The author demonstrates the utility of the conceptual framework proposed by showing how it can overcome some typical theoretical dilemmas and research difficulties that Marxists are facing in their analysis of late industrialising societies.

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BACK TO SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY:
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Provisional publication date: May 1991
hardcover 0-333-53155-8

As an over-reaction to the theoretical provincialism of the early post-war period, Anglo-Saxon sociologists today are so much absorbed by theoretical developments in other disciplines (epistemology, linguistics, etc.) that they have failed to translate the insights generated in neighbouring fields into sociological concepts proper.
In trying to demonstrate the specific logic of sociological theorising, Nicos Mouzelis draws from a variety of theoretical traditions in order to construct a set of interrelated concepts useful for bridging the gulf between macro and micro sociologies. Drawing examples mainly from the sociology of development and from the theory of organisations, he shows concretely how the conceptual framework proposed can help the researcher to avoid both the *reification* of macro institutional structures and their *reduction* to the intersubjective understanding of micro actors.

"This is an outstanding contribution to current controversies in sociological theory. With remarkable clarity and concision, Mouzelis exposes the contradictory implications of two basic distinctions (agency versus structure, and social versus system integration) around which so much highly abstract theorizing (in particular so-called 'structuration' theory) has revolved for so long with small consequences for the study of actual social systems . . . BACK TO SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY is the most powerful contribution to the subject I have seen in recent years, and it is bound to have a very important influence on the course of future debates."
DAVID LOCKWOOD

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stern) accounts of what happened does call into question how open the West really is. If materialism leaves no space for minority cultures, then electoral politics seems to leave little space for non-party politics, (whether supported by minorities or majorities).

Dahrendorf says that 'the round table politics' of the revolution were not 'normal'. But what are 'normal politics'? How does 'normal politics' succeed in excluding issues like environmental concern or concern about nuclear weapons that large numbers of people care deeply about? These are issues that it would surely be valuable to discuss with our counterparts in the East.●

Peter Collier on the rise of Pierre Bourdieu

Homo Academicus

Since François Mitterrand declared education a national priority in 1988, his second socialist government has launched an extraordinary campaign to expand institutions and staff, with the goal of doubling the 40 per cent rate of pupils qualifying for (an almost free) university education. This month the education budget has overtaken the defence budget. One possible explanation of this flamboyantly anti-Thatcherite scenario might be that Michel Rocard's minister of education, Lionel Jospin, invited Pierre Bourdieu to join his advisory committee.

It was as if Raymond Williams had been given a blank cheque and asked to redesign British education. Bourdieu, whose work is now being published in English by Polity Press, has spent much of his career demystifying the French education system. **Homo Academicus** (*Polity, hbk £35, pbk £10.95*) in particular revealed how the professorial mandarins cloned and inhibited their successors, fostering elitism and inertia. Most worrying for the socialist government, still shaken by the failure of its 1984 education bill, were Bourdieu's rude statistics: the real agents provocateurs of the May 1968 revolution were neither student conspirators nor brutal riot police, but a careless government which failed to match its random expansion of student numbers with any commensurable increase in resources.

Bourdieu has shunned media attention, which is perverse in a country where the Camus-Sartre quarrel was a public spectacle, and where Simone de Beauvoir or Lacan could mobilise teams of literati to publicise their causes. Like Sartre and de Beauvoir, Bourdieu studied the noble discipline of philosophy at the highly competitive Ecole Normale Supérieure, but he surprised his tutor, Althusser, by leaving his research on phenomenology in order to work within an allegedly minor discilpline, social anthropology.

Like Foucault, Barthes and Lévi-Strauss before him, Bourdieu is professor at the Collège de France, a famous but marginal institute which enrols no students and awards no diplomas. But meanwhile he has founded a 'Centre for European Sociology' at the Ecole Practique des Hautes Etudes, where he has trained a whole team of graduates who contribute their research to the unorthodox review, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, which uses techniques borrowed from the popular press (cartoons, photographs, interviews).

Over the last year he has thrown his energies into a multi-lingual review, *Liber*, in an attempt to break the parochial mould of European literary journalism. It was never easy to believe that partnership with the *Times Literary Supplement* would fulfil his path-breaking ambitions. But, in the long term, Bourdieu's work has transformed at least French sociology and its public image.

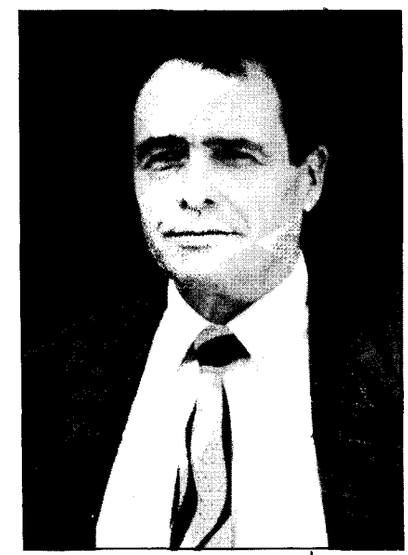
His works analyse specific cases of behavioural disposition, or habitus, through elaborate survey work. In *Distinction*, photographs, interviews and extracts from magazines mingle cheerfully with statistics on education, income and class. Intricate charts illustrate the social factors leading to divergent tastes for Bach, tennis, Petula Clark, face cream, antiques, and holidays in Majorca.

Despite – or because of – his adventurous methodology and irreverent choice of topics, Bourdieu has been accused of pragmatism, eclecticism and pessimistic functionalism by fellow sociologists. Yet he does not believe that the social determinisms which he exposes are inevitable. He writes in the tradition of Weber, Marx and Irving Goffman, taking what seem to be natural phenomena and exposing their constructed nature: *Homo Academicus* detects social snobbery in the adjectives used by a professor when grading her students' essays; **The Love of Art** (*Polity, hbk £29.50*) extrapolates from questionnaires distributed at museums by Bourdieu's students in order to disclose how neatly aesthetic feelings correlate with levels of schooling.

Bourdieu owes a part of his success to the creation of a new language. Recyclying terms from Freud and Marx, he reveals a social unconscious, and exposes the economic drive behind moral and cultural matters. He takes his metaphors – without always accepting that they are metaphors – from economics: agents work to amass cultural capital; they invest in education and receive interest in the form of social power as well as high salaries. Language plays a key part in creating and sustaining this social world. **In Other Words** (*Polity, hbk £29.50, pbk £8.95*) shows how politicians and sociologists themselves manipulate opinion by using terms like 'the people' as a convenient way of avoiding analysis of the social construct.

It is through this attention to language that Bourdieu returns to philosophy with a vengeance. In *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* Bourdieu examines the public discourse of Weimar and the Reich, and plots the transposition of social and political judgements into sublimated philosophical system where they are reformulated in terms of 'care' and 'being'. In France this iconoclastic essay was met with disdainful silence.

Many of the above mentioned works were collective efforts by Bourdieu and his colleagues, reflecting a conscious drive towards cultural egalitarianism and scientific collaboration. But Bourdieu refuses to claim objectivity. On the contrary, he admits and studies the problem of the social scientist's presence as a participant in the field of his research. And his strong personality emerges in the complex language which articulates his work. His phrases crawl with alternatives and



after-thoughts (or 'tendrils', to quote David Lodge). But there are reasons. Bourdieu is alert to the unconscious transactions that underpin discourse: determined not to yield to linguistic facility, he persistently filters and refracts an argument, hoping to preempt a whole range of potential misreadings. And there are times when a little more complexity in public thinking about society must be welcome. We have seen the havoc wrought when the literal-minded are entrusted with power.●

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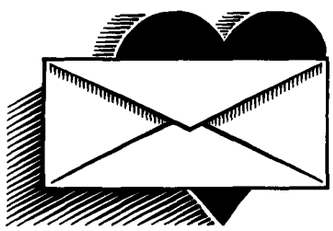

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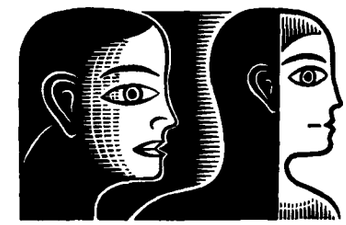

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● **In memoriam.** Samson, Peter. October 17, 1922 – September 7, 1989. The changes you lived through and worked for made you the person we love and miss so deeply. Suzanne, John, Peter, Robin, Nicola, Jen and grandchildren.

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Andrea Dworkin

Andrea Dworkin was born in Camden, New Jersey in 1946, and now lives in New York. She is America's foremost radical feminist, lauded for her power as a writer, activist and anti-pornography campaigner. Her analysis of pornography and sexual mores has provoked controversy among both feminists and the establishment. Her fictional work has produced critical outcry, accusing her of the very thing she has campaigned against for years – pornography.

What magazines and newspapers do you take? *Ms., Newsweek, Time, National Review, Rolling Stone, New York, Mirabella, Sears, Wall Street Journal, Vanity Fair, TV Guide, Woman Of Power, Media Report to Women, The Iconoclast, Women Hurt In Systems Of Prostitution, Media Week.*

What foreign languages do you speak? I used to speak Dutch and Greek, but that was long ago. I read Hebrew as a child and French as a teenager. I've also studied Russian. Now I speak gutter American.

What is your favourite tv programme? *Nightline*, a late night chatshow on ABC.

When do you listen to music? When I work and when I am extremely upset.

When was the last time you prayed? I often pray to a god I don't believe in.

Do you have a recurring dream? I have several – they seem completely real and I don't know they are until I wake up. I seem to visit places or people in ways that develop over years.

What is the most common colour in your wardrobe? Black. When I was a child it made me feel grown up, but I wasn't allowed to wear it.

What is your favourite meeting place? Gran Café degli Artisti in New York. It's dark, old, quiet and no one bothers me there.

What is your favourite piece of architecture? I don't notice architecture; it makes me think of Ayn Rand.

Who do you reveal your secrets to? Not you. Close tried and true friends, though I keep many things strictly to myself.

What makes you feel secure? Nothing.

How regularly do you consult your horoscope? Often.

What do you blame your parents for? Nothing anymore.

When did you last visit your parents? I can't remember.

What is your biggest regret? Getting married.

You're driving through a hot, desolate expanse. What's playing on the stereo? Country music.

Which is your city of the nineties? New York. The city is dying – I can't bear it, but I don't want to desert it.

Where do you wish you were living? I keep thinking about where I want to go, but I don't know.

Where is your favourite holiday destination? I just get on a plane and go somewhere I haven't been. This happens only when I am so exhausted I can't say whole words.

How has your diet changed in the past ten years? Less meat, more seltzer.

What physical exercise do you do? Walk, think, type, read, and write letters.

At what age do you want to stop working? I don't want to stop.

Do you really need your car? I don't have a car.

What is your favourite advertisement? How can anyone like advertisements? I hate advertisements for their ideas, reality, and intrusion.

What are you doing for the environment? Staying out of it as much as possible.

What part of your life would you take into a next life? My love for the friend I live with.

Who do you respect? Most of my colleagues in the political work I do: they are very brave and very loving.

What do you no longer believe in? Sexual liberation.

What would you die for? My work.

What current campaign do you most support? Creating a civil law to redress injury through pornography, and the trafficking of women; stopping rape, battery, prostitution and incest. It's all interconnected.

What do you now own that you had never dreamed of owning? A house.

What single thing has most influenced or changed your life? Rape.

What is the most amount of money you've spent on an item of clothing? £500 on a jacket.

What hi-tech device scares you? I don't like any of it. Anything scares me if it breaks or stops working.

How much time do you spend each day on the phone? Hours, I hate it.

Under what circumstances would you support censorship? None.

What makes you feel guilty? Insisting on luxurious hotels when I travel.

Complete this sentence: If I were dictator for a day..... I would probably execute all the pimps and rapists – let everyone else give you utopian answers!

How much more do you want to achieve? I want to go as far as there is in my creative and political work. Past any boundary known. Past anything you or I can now imagine.●

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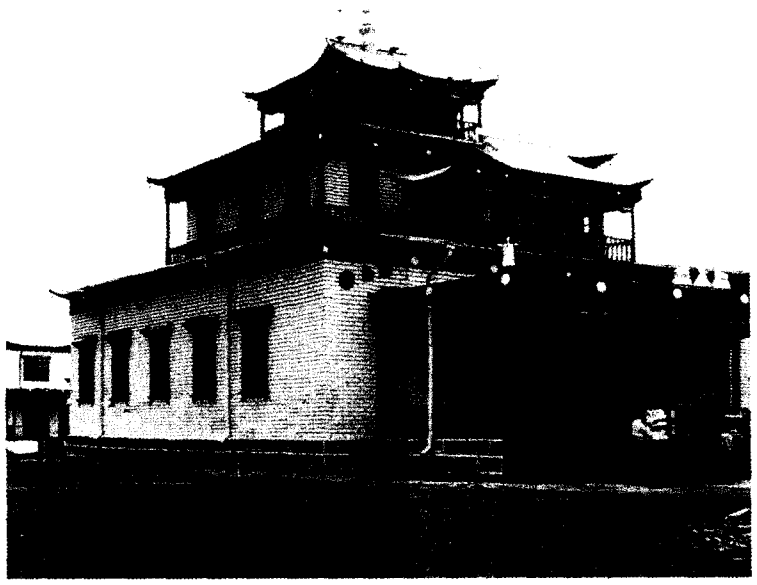
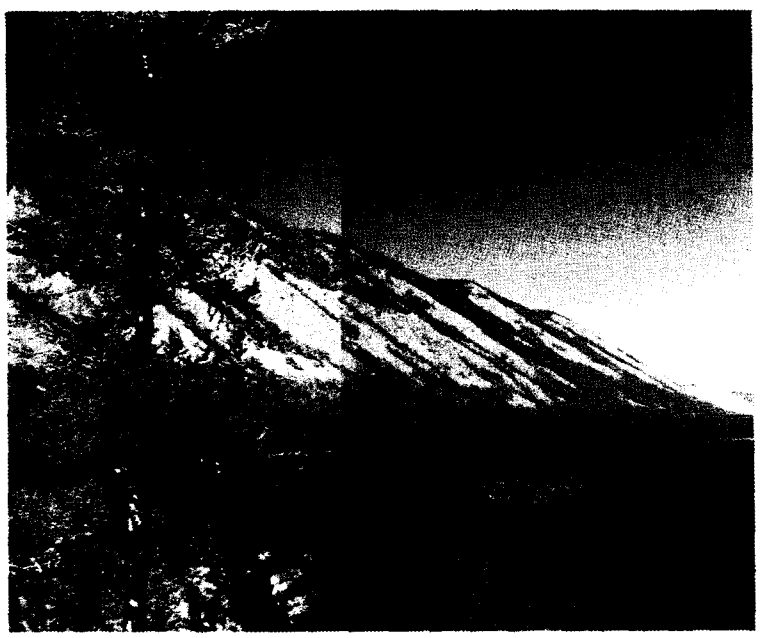


Buddhist monastery in Ulan-Ude, Eastern Siberia



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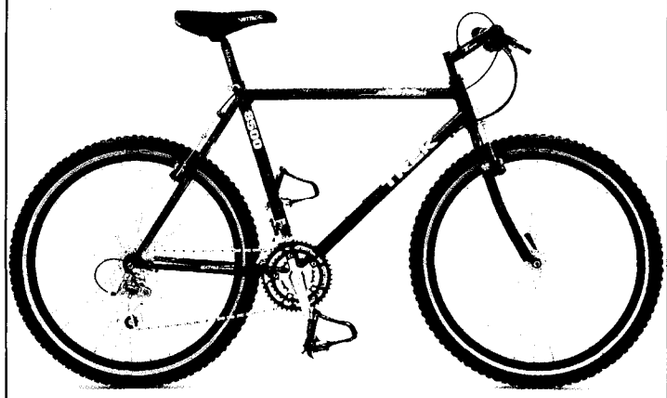

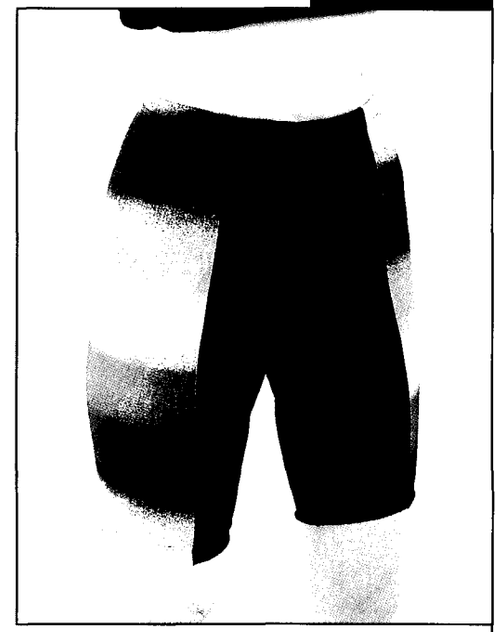

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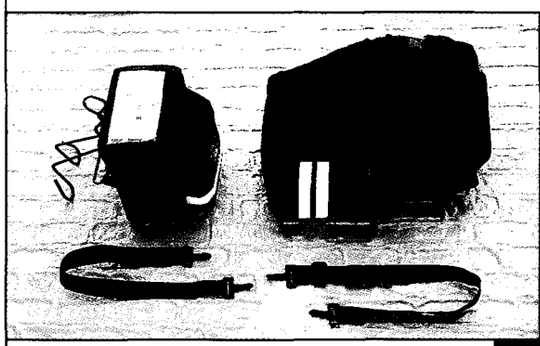

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